

PENTHOUSE

SPRING 2021



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READERS UNDER 15 YEARS



When
life
gives
you
lemons.





WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS TONIGHT?

PENTHOUSE.COM.AU





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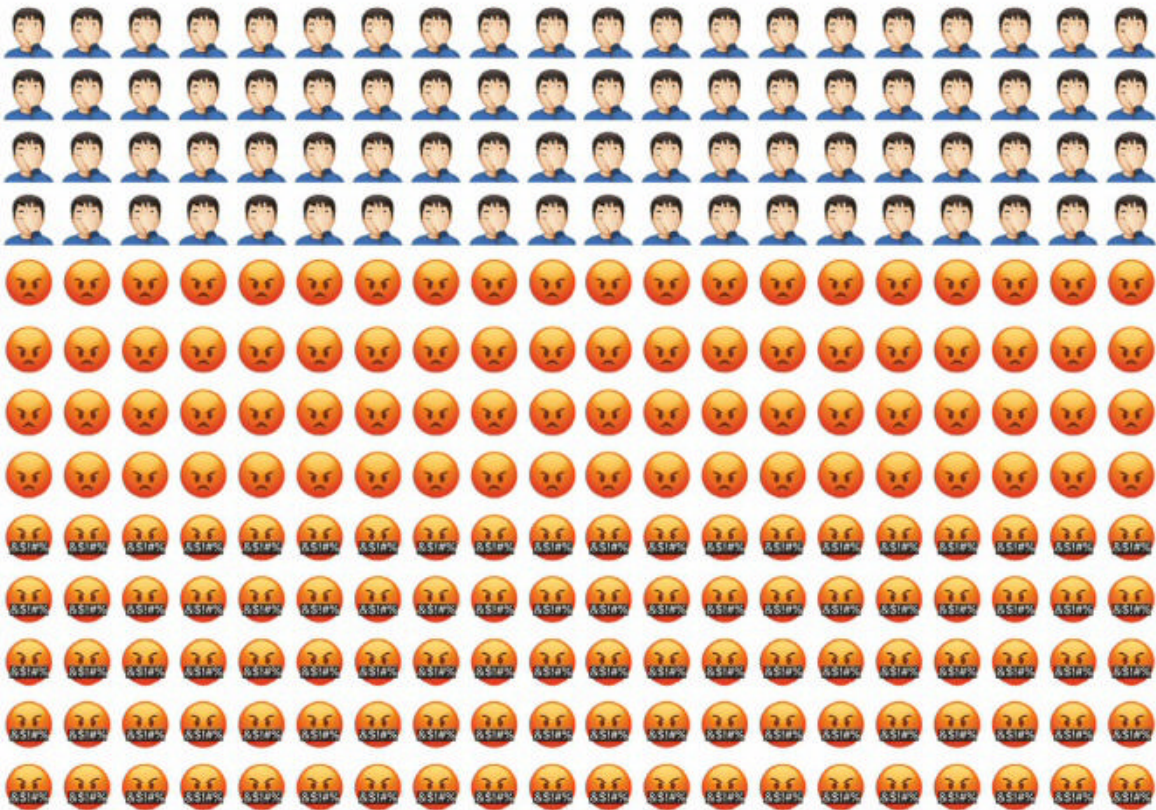
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FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Seriously, what the actual fuck?
Biden.
Harris.
Afghanistan.
Scomo.
Lockdowns.
Firing bullets at protestors.
WTAF is going on?
WTF world are we living in?



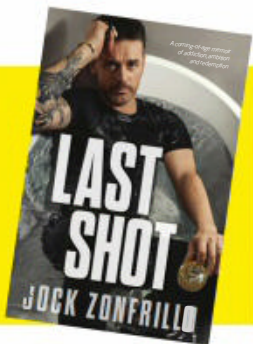
At least the girls are hot.

Enjoy the mag.

DAMIEN COSTAS
Editor-In-Chief

THIS IS YOUR LAST SHOT

Fancy a copy of Masterchef Jock Zonfrillo's 'Last Shot'? It's a coming-of-age memoir about addiction, ambition and redemption from one of Australia's top chefs. You're in luck! We have 10 copies to give away. Write to us at info@penthouse.com.au and tell us what your favourite Masterchef challenge has been, include your name and address for a chance to win!





PENTHOUSE

CONTENTS

SPRING 2021

10 / DEBRIEF

Your wrap up of what's gone on in the world

22 / PATTY MILLS

Our very own NBA rising star continues to impress

32 / THE KINK IN THE INK

Kink, Pin Ups & Crypto Art with Andrew Tarusov

50 / LIFE AFTER CORONA LOCKDOWNS

If lockdowns are our new normal, what's next? asks Gideon Rozner

56 / WE SWALLOWED THE FEAR MONGERING

Accepting lockdowns means waving goodbye to freedoms, writes David Leyonhjelm

60 / INFOCUS

Keeping it old school with photographer Wade Washington

74 / HIGHLIFE

Put a little spring in your step this season

96 / ART OF THE NUDE

Get away from it all with Maddie Neville

108 / CHINA'S WINE REVOLUTION

Becoming one of the world's best winemaking regions

119 / UNHERD

Fearless opinions challenging the conventional wisdom of mainstream media

139 / CHECK OUT

Check out our marketplace for the best gadgets and boys' toys for your home



IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

OUR RUNDOWN OF THE MOST BLAZING, CRAZING AND HAIR-RAISING
HEADLINES FROM THE PAST THREE MONTHS



DAREDEVIL DUCT-TAPED TO AIRCRAFT

JUNE 3



A RUSSIAN pilot is under investigation after a man was duct-taped to the underside of a helicopter and flown above an airfield in Moscow. The stunt was said to be directed by notorious prankster Mikhail Litvin, 21, a popular Russian YouTube creator with around seven million followers. The helicopter pilot, former military aviator Alexander Nazarov, was probed by Russian officials and had his flying licence suspended pending an investigation. Litvin previously made international news with a controversial YouTube video in which he burned his \$185,000 Mercedes-Benz after the car suffered a litany of problems that his local Benz dealer allegedly refused to fix.



GIRL FIGHTS BEAR

JUNE 6



A 17-YEAR-OLD girl from California was caught on video taking on a large, black bear. Yes, a very big, actual bear. She shoved him off her fence after the animal had tried to swipe her four pet dogs. The girl was hailed a hero and told the media, “The dog that the bear grabbed, she’s the baby. I have to protect the baby.” Well, what could go wrong?



CRAPPY OUTCOME

JUNE 12

UP TO
40
CREW MEMBERS INFECTED

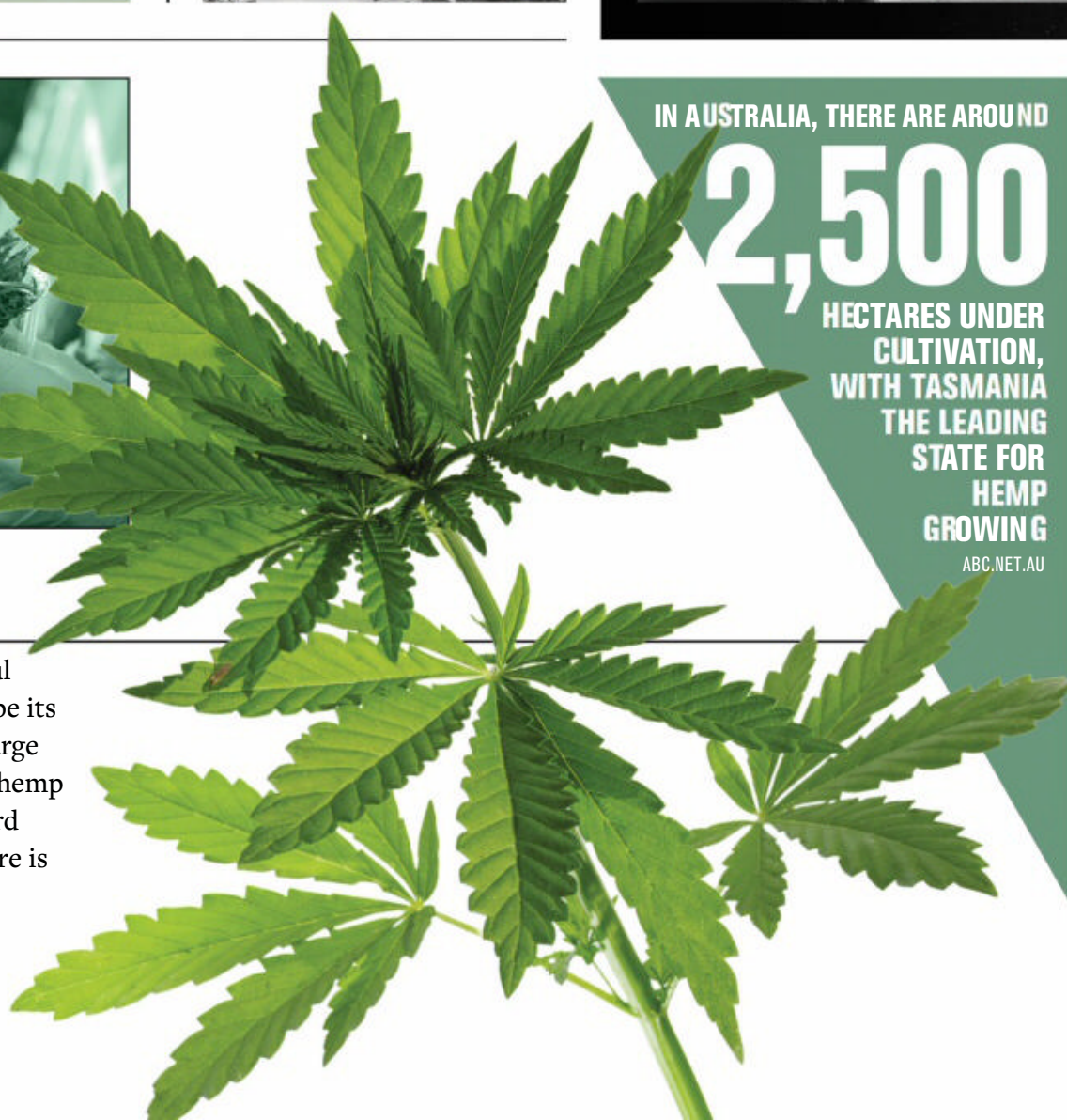
AT least one crew member of NBC’s upcoming *Ultimate Slip ’N Slide* tested positive for giardia, a parasite that causes diarrhoea. According to sources, the network shut down production on an upcoming Slip ’N Slide-themed series after up to 40 crew members contracted giardia, and “the outbreak of ‘awful explosive diarrhea’ left people ‘collapsing’ on set and ‘being forced to run to the porta-potties’”. A crappy outcome indeed.



COULD CANNABIS SAVE THE PLANET?

JUNE 9

SCIENTISTS have hailed hemp’s potential as a powerful tool in the fight against climate change. Proponents hope its potential to save land and water when cultivated on a large scale can benefit farmers and yield an array of valuable hemp products. Dr Michael Obersteiner, the director of Oxford University’s Environmental Change Institute said, “there is good reason to be hyped” about the cannabis plant.



IN AUSTRALIA, THERE ARE AROUND

2,500

HECTARES UNDER CULTIVATION, WITH TASMANIA THE LEADING STATE FOR HEMP GROWING

ABC.NET.AU

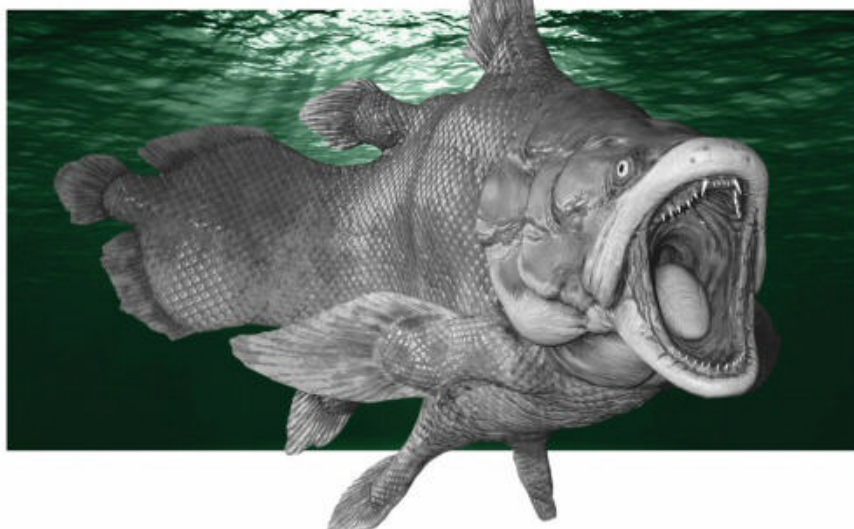


RIGHT: *GIARDIA INTESTINALIS* PROTOZOAN, A PARASITE THAT CAUSES GIARDIASIS.

LIVING FOSSIL' FISH SURPRISES SCIENTISTS

JUNE 17

THE giant bizarre coelacanth can live for up to a century, according to a new study. The nocturnal, slow-moving, human-sized fish, nicknamed a “living fossil”, has been around for 400 million years, but was thought to be extinct until they were found alive in 1938 off South Africa. Living in caves on the ocean floor, coelacanths have been known to grow to two metres and tip the scales at nearly 90 kilos.



WHAT'S UP WITH JOE?

JUNE 14



IT was all a bit too much for Sleepy Joe when he headed to his first overseas trip as president, the G7 summit. Well, he certainly didn't forget to pack his embarrassing gaffs and left the world stunned when he provided a bizarre non-answer to a journalist at a press conference. Sleepy Joe leaned into the mic, mumbled something about “120 days, give me a break...” and walked off stage. But, he had actually been president for 145 days by then.

CLAMPING KOALA

JUNE 22



A PHOTOGRAPHIC sex guide released by Norwegian public television has outraged viewers and received almost 100 complaints in its first few days of release. Public broadcaster NRK created *Sexguiden* with the intention to show a more realistic and diverse picture of sex, but not everyone is happy. The guide consists of around 60 different sex positions, featuring imaginative names such as Wheel of Fortune, Silkworm, Flamingo, Lying Tiger, Trotting Rider, The Speed Dump and – for those who want to spend some koala-ty time with their lover – the curiously named Clamping Koala.

THE MASKED SHAGGER

JUNE 23

JUST when you thought reality shows couldn't get any weirder, Netflix's bizarre new dating show *Sexy Beasts* takes it to the next level. The insane dating show sees singletons searching for love, while sporting elaborate prosthetics and masks to transform them into everything from pandas, monkeys, dogs and dolphins, to oversized insects, pointy-chinned devil creatures, aliens and horrifying scarecrows. Netflix has already ordered a second season of the quirky series. Suddenly *Naked Attraction* doesn't seem so bad.



'SUICIDE MACHINE' INVENTED JUNE 30



AN inventor has created a 'suicide machine' to allow the public to virtually experience death before it happens. Dr Philip Nitschke, aptly nicknamed Dr Death, debuted his invention at the Funeral Fair in Amsterdam in 2018, but it is now open for the public to have a go with. The 3D-printed euthanasia capsule, named 'Sarco' (short for sarcophagus), is designed to "produce a rapid decrease in oxygen level, while maintaining a low CO₂ level (the conditions for a peaceful, even euphoric death)". According to the Amsterdam press release, the purpose of the Sarco is to get "people talking positively about death and with broader consideration than being afraid, scared or shocked". What a time to be... alive?

SMALLVILLE ACTOR SENTENCED FOR HER ROLE IN SEX CULT JULY 1

DISGRACED former TV actor Allison Mack, 38, was sentenced to three years in prison for her role in the NXIVM cult scandal after authorities alleged she'd helped manipulate women into becoming sexual slaves for the group's leader, Keith Raniere. Mack – best known for her role as Chloe Sullivan, a friend of young Superman on the series *Smallville* – pleaded guilty to racketeering and conspiracy in 2019 in connection with the case. Authorities alleged Mack was second-in-command of NXIVM's secret society of women who were coerced into servitude and branded with Raniere's initials.

SHOCK COVID STATS JULY 2

WHILE Australia still attempts to get the vaccine rollout on track, COVID-19 stats stun the world. Indonesia reported a third consecutive day of 24,836 new cases. India surpassed 400,000 deaths from COVID, becoming the third country to do so after the US and Brazil.

US TROOPS WITHDRAW JULY 2

AS American forces withdrew from Afghanistan, local looters swooped in to take advantage. Concerns about the area increase as it's revealed the Taliban captured 700 Humvees, dozens of armoured vehicles and artillery systems.



BROKEN BONER JUNE 30

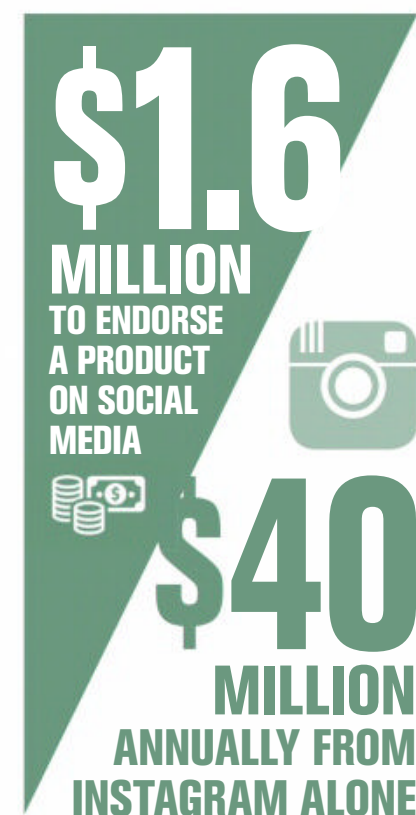


IN a medical first, a man's penis has broken vertically during sex. The urologists behind the case said the 40-year-old man from the UK had been injured during sex, specifically when his penis "buckled against his partner's perineum". An MRI confirmed the man's penis had a three centimetre-long vertical tear along the right side, around the middle of the shaft – rather than the typical horizontal tear. As far as everyone is aware, it's the first-ever reported injury of its kind. Despite the painful injury, the man has made a full recovery.



RONALDO'S HUGE SOCIAL MEDIA PAYDAY JULY 1

HE shoots, he scores... a huge paycheck. Cristiano Ronaldo scores the top spot on Instagram's rich list. The Portuguese footballer can command as much as \$1.6 million to endorse a product on social media. It's estimated he earns \$40 million annually from Instagram, which is more than his salary at the Juventus.



WILD FIRE JULY 4

A HUGE wildfire spread through Cyprus, described as the worst in the country's history. Four people were killed, 50 homes were destroyed and 10 villages were evacuated before Greek and Israeli aircraft successfully got the blaze under control by water bombing the area.



NO TIME TO DIE

007



Check the Classification



#NoTimeToDie

007.com



BIG JAKE DIES JULY 6



THE world's tallest horse, Big Jake, died in Wisconsin at the ripe old age of 20. But it wasn't only his age that was impressive; he was nearly 2.1 metres high and weighed 1,136 kilograms. *The Guinness Book of World Records* certified him as the world's tallest living horse in 2010.

TRUMP SUES JULY 7

FORMER President Donald Trump sued Big Tech; including Google, Facebook and Twitter, claiming he was the victim of censorship. The lawsuit specifically targets the CEOs of each company. You'll remember that Trump's social media accounts were suspended, supposedly amidst "safety concerns" in the wake of the Capitol riots. Trump called his lawsuit, "a very beautiful development for our freedom of speech".



FREEDOM DAY IN UK JULY 19

WHILE most of the world still faces restrictions in an attempt to combat coronavirus infections, the UK threw a hand in the air and said, 'Screw that, we're opening up'. The mandates to wear face-masks were binned, social distancing scrapped and pubs and clubs opened up. Prime Minister Boris Johnson vowed to accelerate the vaccination rate, with every adult in the country being offered two jabs by mid-September.



SNAKES UNDER BED JULY 14

A WOMAN thought there was a clump of fuzz under her bed. She knelt down and slid her arm underneath the bed to try to reach it, but it moved. Then something else moved beside it. It wasn't fuzz, it was a snake. And it wasn't just one snake, it was 18 snakes; 17 babies and the mother. Her husband used a grabbing tool to pick them all up, put them into a linen bag and release them at a nearby creek.



741,300

CASES OF CANCER
WERE CAUSED BY
ALCOHOL

ALCOHOL AWARENESS JULY 14

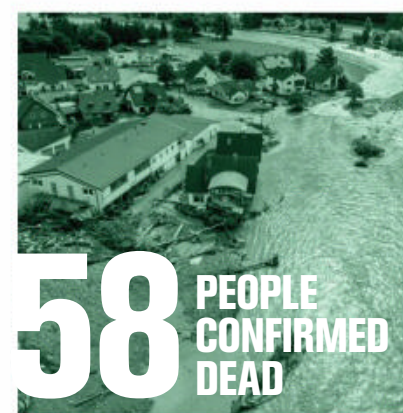
Experts around the world say more needs to be done to highlight the connection between alcohol and cancer. Research has shown that alcohol consumption can cause various cancers including breast, liver, colon, rectum and larynx. It was revealed that in 2020, there were 741,300 cases of cancer caused by alcohol.



DEATHS IN GERMANY JULY 16



AS unprecedented rainfall causes havoc across many part of Europe, at least 58 people died in Germany. The country was left reeling after the deaths, as the world watched news footage of severe destruction of buildings, upended cars and people stranded on rooftops.





THE PEGASUS PROJECT JULY 19

An investigation into a massive data leak revealed some worrying findings. It revealed that journalists, human rights activists, lawyers, academics, presidents and prime ministers had been specifically targeted by authoritarian governments using hacking software sold by an Israeli surveillance company, NSO Group. The technology is meant to be used against crime and terrorists. Pegasus spyware is a malware that infects iPhones and Android devices to enable hackers access to messages, photos, emails and record calls.

14

HEADS OF STATE WERE REVEALED AS FORMER TARGETS OF PEGASUS MALWARE.

IN 2020, A TARGET LIST OF AROUND

50

THOUSAND PHONE NUMBERS WERE LEAKED BY FORBIDDEN STORIES

QUEEN OF DIAMONDS JULY 21

A COURT heard that Luly Lakatos posed as a gem expert to steal seven diamonds from Boodles in Mayfair, London. We're not talking cheapo fakes; we're talking nearly \$8,000 worth of the real deal. She brazenly swapped them with garden pebbles in a highly sophisticated heist while the member of staff went upstairs to take a phone call.



FAKE GEM EXPERT
TRIED TO STEAL
SEVEN DIAMONDS
WORTH NEARLY
\$8,000

MOUTHFUL OF GULL 22 JULY



A 13-YEAR-OLD Pennsylvania girl got the shock of her life on a ride at an amusement park – and it wasn't the ride itself that had her screaming. A seagull flew right into her face as she took a spin on the SpingShot ride in New Jersey. Thankfully, the rank moment the gull actually landed in her face was caught on video. In the video she can be heard yelling, "A bird flew on my face! A bird flew on my face! Oh my God!" but her friend sitting next to her had no idea what was going on.



PAULIE'S PUSH AUGUST 21



IF YOU hear people talking about 'Paulie's Push', this is what they're on about... Former flight attendant, Paul Veneto, lost several colleagues when United Flight 175 was flown into the World Trade Center's south tower in New York on September 11 2001. On the 20th anniversary of the terrorist attacks, he plans to honour his friends by pushing an airline beverage cart from Boston to Ground Zero. September 11th just happened to be his day off; otherwise he would have been on that scheduled flight. His trek will raise funds for the 9/11 crew member, families and also a not-for-profit that assists people dealing with addiction.



GET THE PICTURE

BY FAR the most memorable moment from the 2000 Supercars season was Paul Morris (#29) and Mark Larkham's start-line prang at Oran Park. In fact, it remains one of the biggest ever seen in the history of the Australia Supercars Championship. Morris was smashed from behind by Larkham in his Falcon, which started seven rows further back on the grid. ❶

Supercars: The Holden VS Ford Era 1993-2020 (Gelding Street Press \$39.99), edited by Luke West. Available now where all good books are sold.

PHOTOGRAPHY: CHEVRON ARCHIVE (NEXTMEDIA)





CRUSH

NOEL LEON

FOLLOW @NOELLEONINSTA

NOEL Leon has captured the hearts of more than a million fans from across the globe on Instagram, but the quirky model and writer from Venice Beach tells *Penthouse* that growing up, you'd most likely find her hiding in a corner with her nose in a book.

Openly bisexual, Noel says she finds liberation in living her truth unapologetically. "Society will always put people in boxes. But living in a decade that actually allows women to do our thing, with men or women, while being able to not care what others think is truly liberating," she explains.

As for some advice for the men and women who are keen to court her, Noel says, "My ideal first date would be a brutal game of tennis where I annihilate my opponent, before eating sushi in silence while reading a brutally honest PDF of each other's red flags, pet peeves and positive attributes – bypassing the willy-nilly casual conversation. OK, maybe not all of that. But definitely sushi and tennis."

Game, set, love match? **🏓**



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Nothing Exceeds Like Excess

COWS, GOLD, BOOZE – TURNS OUT YOU CAN BE EXTRAVAGANT WITH ANYTHING YOU FANCY

FOUNDING FATHERS' BAR TAB

The whopping bar tab of a 1787 farewell party for George Washington is still intact. Who needs to read books when you can read bar tabs, hey? According to the bill, what the Founding Fathers drank is enough to put anyone else's binges in the shade. Between the 55 attendees they drank 54 bottles of Madeira, 60 bottles of claret, eight bottles of whiskey, 12 of beer, and seven bowls of alcoholic punch. Impressive.

GORDON BENNETT'S COW YACHT

The son of the founder of the *New York Herald* was born to riches. While James Gordon Bennett snr was well respected for being a hardworking businessman, his son, Gordon was merely known for spending money. He once threw a roll of money into a fire because it was too large for him to fit it into the pocket of his pants. He bought a whole restaurant because he was annoyed someone was sitting in his seat. Plus, he had a yacht built with a room especially reserved for a cow so he could have fresh butter every morning. He installed a fan to blow a fresh breeze on the cow in the heat, and a stack of all-wool blankets to keep it warm in the cold.

CHOWING DOWN WITH KING LOUIS XIV

Imagine eating so much that your stomach isn't just big, it ends up twice the size of the average human. When it came to eating, French King Louis XIV, who reigned for 72 years until his death in 1715, was renowned for running his daily routine around food. His evening meal took place at around 10pm and typically consisted of between 20-30 dishes. The first course was hors d'oeuvres, huge pyramids of fruit was served, as well as roasts, chicken pies, turkey,

duck, boar, venison, oysters, salmon, sardines, even turtles served with rice and vegetables. His sister-in-law, Princess Palatine, is recorded as saying, "He could eat four plates of soup, a whole peasant, a partridge, a large plate of salad, two slices of ham, mutton au jus with garlic, a plate of pastry, all followed by fruit and hard-boiled eggs." Some guests would join him but not eat, just sit and watch him chow down.

E. BERRY WALL'S BONKERS WARDROBE

You would have found Evander Berry Wall strolling the streets of New York towards the end of the 19th century. He became a millionaire by the time he hit 18 and a multi by the time he turned 22, when he inherited millions. He famously spent it all on clothes. There are reports he bought 5,000 neckties and 300 pairs of gloves, refused to drink anything except Champagne and once changed his outfit 40 times before lunch. He outdid even himself when he rocked up to a party wearing black patent leather boots up to his hips.

EMPEROR CALIGULA'S GOLD RUSH

Yeah, yeah, we know that Emperor Caligula loved wild sex parties, but he also had a fetish for gold. The third Roman emperor forced his



“According to the bill, what the Founding Fathers drank is enough to put anyone else's binges in the shade”

servants to pile up his gold reserves simply so he could roll around in the gold because he loved the feel of it on his skin. He also fed his favourite horse oats mixed with gold and, to show off how rich he was, he served guests loaves of bread made of solid gold. Sometimes, just for the hell of it, he threw it on the ground so he could walk across it.

MARIE ANTOINETTE'S CHOCOLATIER

Think obscene luxury – then double it. This chick loved everything to excess and threw ridiculously lavish parties. The last Queen of France before the French Revolution would sit down for a big lunch each day, which in itself sounds pretty standard. But, her snacks were actually meals, like macaroni cheese or vegetables cooked in cream. She loved sweets and desserts; petit fours, crystallised fruits, whatever her staff could serve up would make her eyes dance. She loved chocolate so much she had her own chocolatier at Versailles. She especially liked liquid chocolate, which she drank with whipped cream. ❶





MOTM

PATTY MILLS

BY CORRINE BARRACLOUGH

LOOK at that, Patty Mills' star continues to rise.

Our very own Australian Boomers captain, who's known as one of the league's best shooters, has ended his decade-long stay with the San Antonio Spurs by signing a two-year, \$16.2million contract with the NBA championship contender Brooklyn Nets.

Not bad, eh?

So, that's Mills sorted through to the age of 34, which is 30 years after he started playing his favourite sport. Yes, he first took up basketball as a four-year-old for a local club called The Shadows.

Known for his three-point shooting and his leadership qualities, there had been reports flying around that he could be headed to the Lakers. Talk was that LeBron James' team had reportedly made Mills one of their targets, but he's instead thrown a curveball and netted this deal. It's thought that his established friendship with the Nets general manager Sean Marks could have dunked the deal.

And so, the Nets' fully loaded roster will see the team step onto the court for the 2021-22 NBA season with the most expensive roster ever assembled in the NBA. Mills' new teammates include Kevin Durant, James Harden, Kyrie Irving and DeAndre Jordan.

It's not just this latest chapter that's inspirational, you actually couldn't write Patty Mills' story any better.

Patrick Sammie Mills, born and raised in Canberra, is of Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal Australian descent.

In 2007 he became only the third Indigenous basketball player to play for Australia's national team. He was selected by Portland Trail Blazers after playing two years of college basketball for Saint Mary's College of California.

He's played for Melbourne Tigers and then for Xinjiang Flying Tigers in China before heading to the United States in March 2012 to play for the Spurs.

And, impressively, he helped Spurs win the 2014 NBA Championship against the Miami Heat.

His uncle is former Olympian basketballer Danny Morseu, who was the second Indigenous Australian to represent Australia at the Olympics in basketball. Mills was the third, years later.

He's also the cousin of Rugby League player Edrick Lee and fellow basketball player Nathan Jawai.

He also played underage Australian Rules' football at a high level and could have, at one point, decided to pursue a career in the Australian Football

player in NBA history to reach that milestone.

He was already on our national radar, but you'll remember that Mills became the first Indigenous Australian to be a flag bearer when he carried the Australian flag at the 2021 Olympic opening ceremony alongside Cate Campbell.

What else?

Well, he's known for his enthusiasm and met his long-term girlfriend Alyssa Levesque, who was also a college basketball player, while

“The Net's fully loaded roster will see them step onto the court for the 2021-22 NBA season with the most expensive roster ever assembled in the NBA”

League (AFL), but he instead concentrated on basketball.

Many players, managers and fans are glad he made that choice. On 26 April 2012, Mills set career highs with 34 points and 12 assists for his first NBA.

On 19 January 2020, he made his 1,000th NBA 3-pointer. Keep in mind: he's the first Australian

they were both attending Saint Mary's College of California.

And, just to prove he really can do it all, in 2017 he co-wrote a series of books for young readers with Jared Thomas, published in 2018 as *Game Day! Championship Collection*.

So, yeah, this guy's pretty impressive all round. **i**



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FILM

SONG AND DANCE

BY PAUL DALGARNO

YOU know how it is: your day's going badly until you hear strings from an invisible orchestra and burst into song. Rather than laugh, your significant others respond in kind, expressing their love and support in rhyming couplets, culminating in a coda that threatens to smash your fancy crystal with its ovation-worthy high C.

No? Well, why not? The resurgence in Hollywood musicals would have us believe that showtunes and life's slings and arrows are synonymous.

Already this year we've had *In the Heights*, based on the stage musical by Lin-Manuel Miranda, and the batshit-looking Cannes opener *Annette* with Adam Driver and Marion Cottillard. Among those still to come we have Miranda's directorial debut *Tick, Tick... Boom*, *Diana: The Musical*, and Steven Spielberg's \$100 million reworking of *West Side Story*.

We've come a long way since

the 1960s Post-Golden Age of musicals, an era that saw the speak-properly-woman histrionics of *My Fair Lady* (1964), an Oscar-winning nun on the run in *The Sound of Music* (1965) and the sinus-crushing squeaks and squawks of *Doctor Doolittle* (1967) – a heady brew of cockneys, Nazis and nincompoops cranking out showstoppers that were comic, serious or tear-jerky... nobody really cared. The aim, as with all musical theatre, was to knock you out with a two-to-three-minute contextually dependent, narratively driven, sucker punch.

The 70s, 80s and early 90s were dominated by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Claude-Michel Schönberg – an epoch of hopelessly sincere opera-light on stage, replete with pop-inspired showtunes for which we're still paying the cinematic price. There were laughs aplenty to be had in the film adaptation of *Cats* (2019) but they were unintentional. Bread-thief Jean Valjean choosing

“The resurgence in Hollywood musicals would have us believe that showtunes and life's slings and arrows are synonymous”

song as the best defence against heavily armed French soldiers in *Les Misérables* (2012) was meant to be sombre not silly.

Woody Allen's *Everyone Says I Love You* (1996), while no masterpiece, was a notable outlier in this po-faced period, the actors giving WTF glances at their co-stars whenever the singing started. *Moulin Rouge* (2001) and to a lesser degree *The Greatest Showman* (2017) also stake claims for the self-aware, have-your-cake-and-eat-it postmodern musical.

But in the latest cinematic rush, the orchestral baton has

passed firmly into the double-grip of diversity and authenticity (if you ignore the singing and jazz hands). Miranda's monster stage hit *Hamilton* (2015), with its colour-blind casting and rapping rather than arias, made a convincing financial case for more socially conscious musicals, the sort we'll see, or avoid, on screens before the end of the year with *Dear Evan Hansen*, about a high school student with anxiety disorders, and *Everybody's Talking About Jamie*, in which a teenager overcomes prejudice to become a drag queen. By the time *West Side Story* appears in December, we'll likely be talking less about why New York gangs are scrapping with sawn-off melodies and more about the fact the Hispanic characters are played by Latinx actors, in sharp contrast to 1961 original.

The wave is coming hard so make your decision: tune in and tune up or tune out. **1**

Postmortem Payday

BY PAUL DALGARNO

POSTHUMOUS albums are a sign o' the times. Take Prince's 'new' album *Welcome 2 America*, which initially had been scheduled for distribution during his lifetime in 2011 before being cancelled. But it was finally released in July, five years after his passing. It's the third Prince album since his accidental overdose in 2016, but the first he'd recorded with a release, even a tour, in mind. So, releasing it now must be ethically sound, right? Hmmmm...

Prince presumably shelved the album for a reason, and let's not forget he spent the better part of the '90s with the word *slave* scrawled across his cheek, disowning his stage name in protest against the money-over-creativity stance of his corporate overlords.

Some albums do receive a tacit sign-off before the artist signs off. Queen's *Made in Heaven* (1995), released after Freddie Mercury's death, is the gold standard in deathly consent, given he knew while recording his vocals that the gig was up – not that he would have necessarily loved the schmaltzy pap the album would become.

Others are posthumous by technicality. *Life After Death* – the most aptly named record of all time – appeared barely two weeks after the Notorious B.I.G. was gunned down in 1997.

But many artists, we have to assume, would recoil from their amped-up afterlife. What might Amy Winehouse have made of *Lioness: Hidden Treasures* (2011), a cobbled together collection of covers and outtakes? Would famously shy Kurt Cobain have been mortified all over again when his pre-fame bedroom efforts became public property via 2015's *Montage of Heck: The Home Recordings*?

So why release music by artists who are, biologically speaking, clearly past their prime? The answer, of course, rhymes with honey.

Though they've been around since the gramophone era, posthumous albums were historically unlikely to hit No. 1. From the mid-1950s to early-1990s, Jim Croce, Janis Joplin and John Lennon were the only three to achieve those heights – a trend, if only a trickle. But the chart-topping success of



Selena's *Dreaming of You* burst the dam in 1995. The fact that she – like Lennon – had been fatally shot surfaced as a key ingredient in the secret sauce.

In the quarter of a century since, the majority of posthumous No. 1 albums have

Game (2004), featuring duets with artists 2Pac had never met and his spectral voice being manipulated to meet the record's needs. But maybe abusing an artist's vision and consent is a small price to pay for a postmortem payday.

“Maybe abusing an artist’s vision and consent is a small price to pay for a postmortem payday”

been by rappers and hip-hop artists, a shocking number of whom have been shot dead, frequently in drive-by killings – the alpha ghost being Tupac Shakur, who had finished only one of his seven posthumously released albums before his murder in 1996. Three of those reached No. 1, including the lamentable, Eminem-produced *Loyal to the*

Incidentally, if not coincidentally, the last non-rapper to hit No. 1 with an afterlife album was Prince with *The Very Best of Prince* (2001), which re-entered the charts at the top spot following his death. As he muses from beyond the grave on *Welcome 2 America*: “Come on in, sit right down and fill up your pockets, yeah.” **i**



SPORT

Supercars: At the dawn of a new era

BY LUKE WEST

AUSTRALIA'S premier motor racing series finds itself in something of a holding pattern as season 2021 plays out. On the track, Shane van Gisbergen is seemingly cruising to his second championship, such is the New Zealander's domination of the season so far. The reigning Bathurst champ is the undisputed class of the field, with his closest challengers being Red Bull Ampol Racing teammate Jamie Whincup and Walkinshaw Andretti United spearhead Chaz Mostert. All three drive Holdens, in what was meant to be the local brand's farewell year, before Chevrolet Camaros replace the Commodores. More on that in a moment.

Whincup, statistically the GOAT with seven championship wins under his belt, is on his farewell tour, having announced his retirement from full-time competition. He'll slip into the team principal's role at RBAR – aka Triple Eight Race Engineering – at season's end. Not that Whincup wants to talk about his retirement, the 38-year-old eager to avoid having “a funeral tour”.

The Ford challenge has been significantly weakened this year after three-time and reigning Supercars champion Scott McLaughlin headed stateside after a call-up to the crack Team Penske in the increasingly competitive IndyCar Series. A Blue Oval successor to McLaughlin is yet to emerge, with neither of the new boys at Dick Johnson's team, Anton de Pasquale and Will Davison, nor Tickford Racing's Cameron Waters, yet to assert their authority as undisputed new Mustang kingpin.

Truth be known, Supercars racing – formerly

V8 Supercars – is really just going through the motions on track in 2021. It's a different story behind the scenes, though, as the category plots an uncertain future and competitors argue technical specifications.

Supercars' world was turned upside down on February 19, 2020 when General Motors announced it would retire the Holden brand from the Australian market by year's end. Thus, season 2020 was the last featuring Commodores officially representing Holden.

Come October 2020, van Gisbergen and Garth Tander gave Holden a 34th Great Race victory, bringing down the curtain on 52 years of official involvement in the Bathurst classic and touring car racing generally. That same

their allegiance to a different subsidiary of the American giant, even though many Holden fans were blissfully ignorant of their beloved ‘local’ brand's true US ownership.

Loud V8s and rear-wheel drive will remain the sport's foundations, but with provision for electric-assisted hybrid power systems in the future to make it more market relevant and therefore attractive to new manufacturers. Supercars says the aim of Gen3 is to enhance the racing spectacle, make building and running racecars more affordable for the teams, and improve the visual appeal of the cars by making them look more like the road cars. The latter is to avoid the deformed look of the existing Mustang racer.

“Supercars racing – formerly V8 Supercars – is really just going through the motions on track in 2021”

season-closing weekend saw the launch of Supercars' Gen3 rules, Chevrolet Camaro announced to replace Commodore for 2022 as the category moves to two-door coupes from four-door sedans. General Motors gave its blessing for Supercars teams to use a facsimile of the road-going Camaro bodywork draped over a new control chassis, although the company won't fund teams.

Supercars worked hard to get Camaro over the line for 2022. Doing so was an existential mission, given that approximately two-thirds of its fanbase identify as Holden fans. It simply cannot afford for this core segment of its audience to drift away. Series chiefs are banking on Commodore diehards transferring

Just which new marques and models join, if any – will be fascinating to observe. At this stage it will just be Camaro versus Mustang when the new era begins in August 2022, six months later than originally planned. With several teams still arcing up about the cost involved in changing over to all-new machinery, a further delay, to 2023, remains is a distinct possibility.

While Supercars' short-term future is assured, the medium to longer-term future is far less certain. Three decades of Holden versus Ford is drawing to a close. **1**

Luke West is the author of Supercars: the Holden versus Ford era (Rockpool Publishing, \$39.99).



Modern Pirate encapsulates a free and easy approach to individual style and expression. Born and bred in the suburbs of Melbourne and influenced by our global travels, we thrive off culture, style, adventure and storytelling.

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Hidden cost of IoT

BY IAN MILES CHEONG

TECHNOLOGY is part and parcel of living in today's modern age. Wherever you go, no matter what you're doing, it's impossible to get away from technology. From the GPS in your car to the smartphone you use to watch videos and check your work emails, technology is indispensable.

We're stuck in a digital box with no escape, and that box is getting smaller and smaller, with the advent of always-online internet-connected devices that are part of the so-called 'Internet of Things'.

The Internet of Things offers the promise of convenience at a low, corporate-subsidised price tag for a high-quality product that does what you need it to do. You don't even own it. As the World Economic Forum says, "You will own nothing, and you will be happy."

However, it comes with a hidden cost.

This digital reality in which we live provides corporations with all-new ways to monetise our existence. Your life, experiences, and habits are for sale. Everything you do is tracked, nothing is off-limits.

How many times you open your fridge. How many times a week you wash your clothes. How often you sip your drink. It's all for sale. Corporations are selling that information, and

governments are buying it.

As mundane as it seems, it's in the interest of every marketer to want to know what your habits are. Nestlé wants to know how many scoops of sugar you put in your cup of coffee, how much milk you put in it, and how many times a day you drink it.

Businesses sell you products they know you'll want to buy through targeted ads – and then some.

Corporations will argue that it helps them to make better products – and that may be so – but the one-size-fits-all approach distills every unique experience into something generic. A cup of Nescafé, while decent, will never taste quite as good as your personal cup of coffee.

You are for sale, whether you like it or not.

Security and privacy are sacred, but the Internet of Things deprives us of our most intimate human experiences. To be part of this new digital reality, we end up sacrificing what little privacy we have left for ourselves without even realising what we're giving up.

With the ever-prevailing claws of the IoT encroaching into our daily lives, it's impossible to escape. There is no 'off' switch or opting out unless you want to live as a pariah in the wilderness – as Henry David Thoreau did in Walden.

The United Kingdom is now set to launch a social credit program to

tackle the country's obesity crisis. This program, which is modelled on a similar scheme in Singapore, calls on citizens to install an app that tracks the dietary habits and physical activity of those who choose to opt-in.

In return, the high-performing users are rewarded with 'loyalty points' to be exchanged for discounts, free tickets, and other incentives – all subsidised by the taxpayer, of course. Based on some cost-benefit analysis, the economists behind the strategy figured out that it's cheaper to train people's behaviour than it

foods is in fact a punishment for doing the opposite. That one time you sneaked a bite of a donut? That's your extra allowance for the week gone.

None of this would have ever been possible were it not for the ubiquity of the Internet of Things.

The world's governments, for all their good intentions of behaving like nanny states, don't always have anyone's interests at heart. After all, the food pyramid was a lie. Corn is bad for you. Can you really trust the government to dictate what's best for you?

Ted Kaczynski, better known

“There is no ‘off’ switch or opting out unless you want to live as a pariah in the wilderness”

is to treat them after they get sick and depend on the socialised National Health Service to take care of them.

Either way, it's behavioural conditioning. Such systems, which operate on information provided by the Internet of Things, allow coercive governmental and corporate forces to run massive, country-sized Skinner boxes and silently dictate the behaviour of every individual through a system of rewards and punishment.

What may seem like an opt-in program that rewards people for exercising and buying healthy

as the Unabomber, infamously described this digital reality as the “technological society” to which we are enslaved. In his so-called manifesto, the *Industrial Society and Its Future*, Kaczynski warned of the next (and now ongoing) Industrial Revolution and its consequences on the human race.

Although it's impossible to justify his acts of terrorism upon private citizens and institutions alike, Kaczynski's fears are being proven right with every step of the way we take on the road to glorious technological connectivity. **1**

LET GAMES BE GAMES

BY IAN MILES CHEONG

DIFFICULTY is a point of contention among gamers, with many boasting to having beaten *Halo* on Legendary difficulty, or *Doom* on Nightmare. The memory of beating *Dark Souls*' final boss with just a sliver of health is one no one could ever forget.

But these are experiences limited to relatively few gamers who've taken the time and effort to obtain bragging rights.

For a long time, games have rewarded the best of the best. Players who complete levels on the hardest difficulty, or with any number of set challenges, are rewarded with achievements and items to showcase their skill.

Being at the top of the game is nothing new, going way back to the 1980s when gamers would challenge each other in arcades to top the leaderboards with a high score. The challenge – that sense of raw competitiveness – is what's driven humanity to its greatest heights, on both a personal and civilizational level. It's the right to say, "I'm better than you."

And therein lies the clash between those who enjoy video games for what they are – canvasses for the expression of pure, unbridled skill – and those who want video games to be something they are not: accessible to everyone.

It's 'accessibility' in the form of equity. It's the dumbing down of games, the simplification of mechanics, and an overall disregard for the qualities that make a video game a video game.

The conversation over game difficulty was ignited when the Xbox account on Twitter stated: "Beating the game on the lowest difficulty is still beating the game." In other words, congratulations on your participation trophy.

The debate was exacerbated by the upcoming release of the long-awaited *Psychonauts 2*, which boasts an invincibility setting. Framed as an 'accessibility' option. Playing the game as the developers intend would conceivably require turning on the mode, and sitting back as the player moves passively through the world. Were I one of the developers in charge of the game's combat system and game balance, I'd



“Those who fail to muster the skill required to beat the game are jealous of those who can”

consider my job superfluous.

Conversations about difficulty and accessibility in games can be traced back to the emergence of *Dark Souls* as a popular genre. Built with the hardcore gamer in mind, the unforgivingly hard *Dark Souls* and its kin reward those capable of taking on the challenge, while encouraging those who can't pass the bar to simply try again until they succeed. It's mentality alien to those who would give up after the first try.

The claims of these gentrifiers fall flat when challenged with the reality of what *Dark Souls* actually is: a manageable game with a high difficulty curve. Unlike most games, which are easy to play but difficult to master, *Dark Souls* requires patience. Once its mechanics 'click' for you, the difficulty levels out and becomes incredibly less challenging.

Those who fail to muster the skill required to beat the game are jealous of those who can. It's a case of haves and have-nots. Oppressed and oppressor. And in this case, gamers who answer the call are those oppressive gatekeepers who want to keep out the peasants from their domain.

The gentrifiers are dime a dozen. Across game enthusiast publications, and on social media, gentrifiers have arrived on the shores of the video game medium. This

new breed of gamer has planted a flag in the sand and says, "This is our land. Every game should be made for everyone."

Developers are listening. The ranks of game journalists incapable of completing tutorial levels have successfully turned their demand for participation trophies to be included in games like *Psychonauts 2* and *Control* with their difficulty sliders that do little to provide players with a sense of prestige for finishing the game on the default setting – yet alone higher difficulties.

Naturally, this has provoked responses from gamers worried about the vulgarisation of the skill-based medium into a passive experience designed for people who don't understand, respect or care about video games. In return, they've been branded 'gatekeepers'.

Why play video games at all if you don't find them accessible? Why should the concept of video games be redefined for the sake of inclusivity? Do developers owe their customers the experiences they crave, or cave to cultural complainers?

For me, the answer's simple: video games are for gamers. Let video games be video games – entertaining, engaging and, most importantly, challenging. To hell with the rest. They can read a book. 📖

ADDICTION. AMBITION. REDEMPTION.

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IN THIS COMING-OF-
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AUSTRALIA has spent most of its life as a political backwater, insulated from the historic civil conflicts that birthed its legal system. You're much more likely to fall foul to a deadly snail shell or come off second best with a crocodile than run into anything so dangerous as a politician with actual power.

MPs aren't known for being the most moral of individuals, but whatever code of ethics they picked up from the wider Australian culture they've managed to keep their hands off the implied liberties and rights of the people. The problem here being 'implied'. Our American cousins spilled a lot of blood securing their freedoms. Once within their grasp, they went to the trouble of protecting them with ironclad law.

Stability is nothing to be scoffed at. The essential premise is that anything not expressly forbidden is *permissible*. This works well in coalition with a small government methodology where the courts primarily resolve serious conflict, but stay away from the unsolvable squabbles

This exceptional balancing act fell apart under the pressure of meddling international bureaucracies. Sovereign nations were quickly suffocated by micro-managing laws created by these foreign systems. The UK recognised this problem, and has taken steps to extract itself from the European Union and its associated legal monstrosity.

Having a good legal system is like being in a stable orbit around a heavy object – in this case, tyranny. Like the sun, you need it – you *want* it, but you must keep your distance. If you get too close to absolute power, you risk being dragged in and destroyed. Alternatively, without the framework of powerful law, you are cast adrift into the cold.

While the vandalism of liberty is new, these laws are old. All it takes is for a self-declared 'emergency' by the Governor General to unfold and suddenly the Australian Dream is up for negotiation.

The Act deals with the quarantining of goods and livestock, as that was its original purpose. However, 50 amendments over the course of its long life saw its powers increased after the Spanish Flu of 1918.

used in the case of a pandemic that threatened the survival of the colony – not to keep every Australian safe from a bad flu. This nightmarish legal scenario was meant to be applied to something that spreads like the flu and kills like Ebola.

The idea that a premier or prime minister would take the Biosecurity Act out of the box and test its limitations on an un-quarantinable wild virus with a slightly higher death rate than the flu would be unimaginable to those who wrote it.

Our leaders have proved that they cannot be trusted to show moderation or proportion.

CREDIT: CEMILE BINGOL / MORRISON



THE KINK IN THE INK

KINK, PIN UPS & CRYPTO ART WITH ANDREW TARUSOV.
BY AMIE WEE





ANDREW Tarusov is a Russian-born artist and animator specialising in pin-up art, who creates bright and bold art with a kinky edge. Tarusov grew up in Rybinsk, Russia, before moving to Moscow and then on to Los Angeles. He now lives in Moscow with his wife and two kids where he spends his days creating drawings, animations and crypto art of classical pin ups, inspired by bronze age comics and fetish art. We spoke to Tarusov about his inspirations, his passion for erotic art and why he thinks crypto art and NFTs are the future of all art.

Did you study art?

Oh yes, I spent a lot of time studying. First, I finished art school, graduated from an arts college where I studied oil painting, and then I spent six years in the Film University in Moscow studying computer graphics and animation.

Has growing up in Russia had any effect on your art?

The middle of Russia is very grey and sad, so I would say it's had the opposite effect! I've always tried to draw more colourful and happier pictures and stories than you see in real life.

What draws you to creating erotic art?

I always loved eroticism in all aspects. Movies, photos and drawings. I just can't resist it. When I started to draw erotic comics and paintings, I felt happiness, I felt that this is it and I decided to stay on that path.

What inspires your illustrations?

I love all kinds of art: movies, old and contemporary paintings, comics, burlesque performances, music videos, trips to museums. Of course, most of all I love erotic art in all forms. I take inspiration from everything: It might be old painters such as François Boucher,

Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, Raphael or contemporary artists like Jeff Koons or Andy Warhol. But the biggest influences are pin-up, erotic and fetish art.

How did you develop your style?

I just drew what I liked. Plus I took some inspiration from other great artists like Gil Elvgren or J. Scott Campbell and mixed it with my own interests.

What equipment do you use to create your illustrations?

I use an iPad and Procreate 90 per cent of time, sometimes I finish my drawings in Photoshop and I use After Effects for animation. I also love traditional art and I paint watercolours and oil for myself when I have a chance.

On your Instagram, you call yourself a Crypto Artist and an NFT Rebel. What made you decide to jump into creating art for the blockchain?

I think that's the future of all art, to be honest. My friend told me about it in the beginning of 2021 and, after research, I understood that this looks like ideal business for me. I create digital art professionally, I love to animate things, I know a lot about the art market in general and I have a decent following.

What type of artwork do you sell as NFTs?

I create and animate new works for that market. I don't sell old stuff. Old is old and I don't think it's fair. I sold some works (for example, my last work went for 0.888 ETH which was US\$2300 at the moment) and I have bids for others. Also I participate in a lot of collaborations with different artists and other interesting people. It's hard to predict the future sales because everything is super new, but I hope some of these collaborations will be very successful.

Do you think there's a future in crypto art?

Yes, I think everything will be based on the blockchain eventually. We just have to wait until it's less energy consuming and easier to set up. You may like it or you may not, but blockchain is the next 'internet'.

What has been your biggest career highlight?

My first crowdfunding campaign was my biggest success. I launched my pin-up calendar dedicated to the Olympic games in Russia in 2014 and nothing happened for two weeks. There was no interest from people at all. But someone posted it somewhere on the internet one day and it went viral overnight! I sold 5,000 copies of it, bought a new car and was invited to speak on television several times.

What advice would you give to someone wanting to pursue a career in art?

Just do what you want to do, draw whatever you want even if it's porn or fan art. You will get your audience eventually and maybe you'll become rich and famous one day.

Tell us something about you that we might not expect.

I love going to sex parties and drawing sketches of people having sex there! It's super fun and interesting.

What are you working on at the moment?

I'm working on the sequel of *Swinging Island* (my erotic graphic novel), on the documentary about Russian Burlesque scene and on a lot of collaborations based on the crypto art.

Have you ever had a muse?

I always have a muse. I love women and they love me. 🍆

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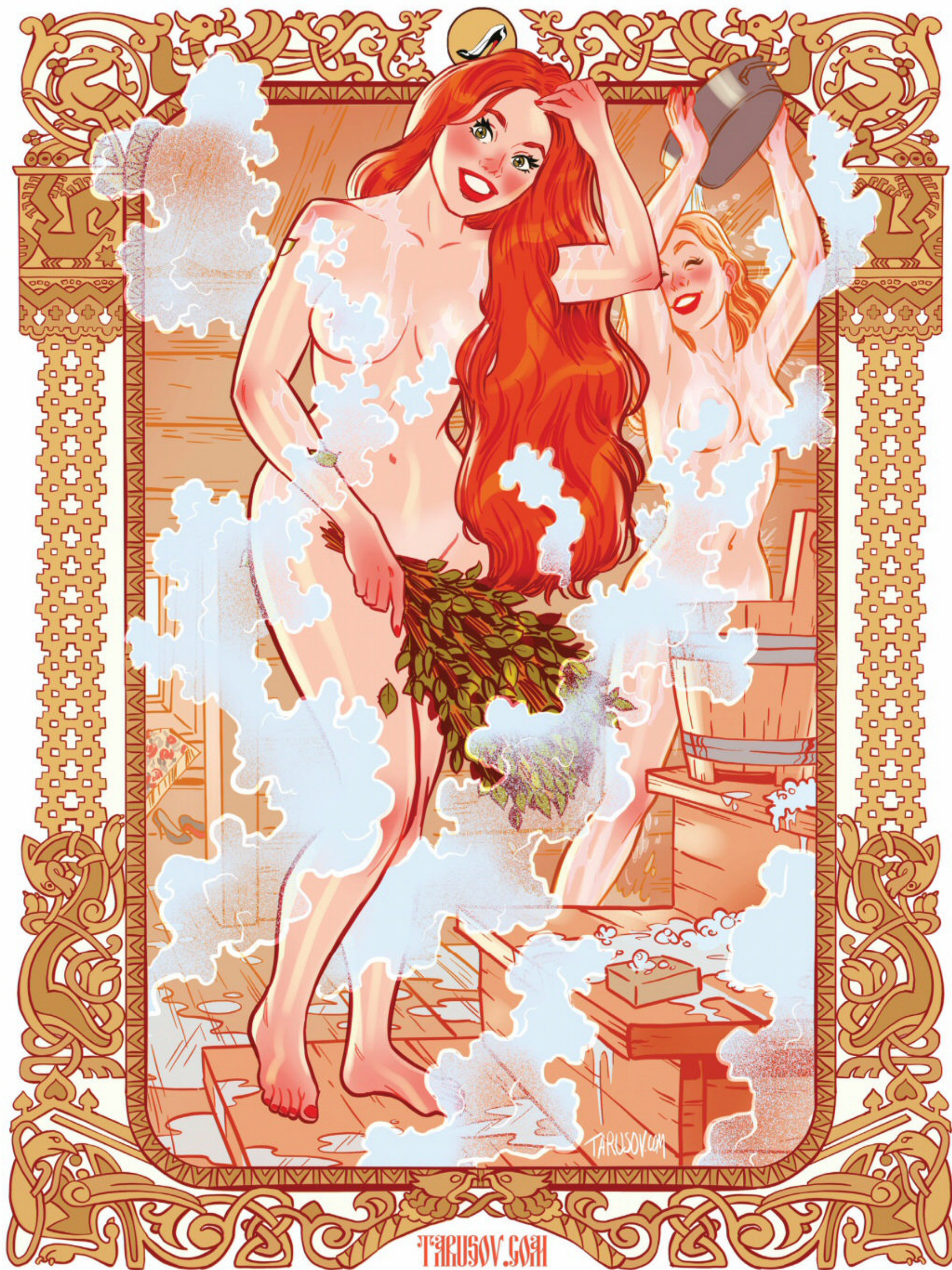




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POSE!







Spitting



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There's small batch, and then there's TINY batch



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INTERVIEW

TRAN SFORMING LIVES

A STORY OF OVERCOMING CHALLENGES, CHANGING YOUR MINDSET,
AND HELPING OTHERS. ONE INSPIRATIONAL FATHER TELLS HIS STORY.
BY CORRINE BARRACLOUGH





PETER Di Prinzio's life story is nothing short of incredible. He was born into a traditional Italian family in Newcastle, Australia and now, having cleared an enormous number of hurdles, he's an inspirational speaker.

He's challenged and beaten adversity not just once, but seven times. To name just a few, he's overcome bullying, wrongful imprisonment, poverty, divorce, depression, mental health challenges and being alienated from his daughter.

And that is what *Penthouse* wanted to speak to him about.

How does a man cope when his only daughter is kidnapped by the mother and all contact denied? What does that do to someone's mental health, sense of self, will to live, and self-esteem? And, how on earth does someone find the strength to channel all of that to help others?

***Penthouse* sat down with Peter to ask all that and more.**

Peter, thanks so much for speaking to us. I understand you've hired a private investigator to track down your daughter? Yes, I'm talking to a solicitor. We also have engaged a private investigator. We have found a lot of information.

Give me the background, tell me about your daughter...

I have a massive story behind me, I guess that's why I'm now an inspirational speaker! I met my ex in 1998, when I moved from Newcastle to Sydney. We eventually got married, two and a half years later, and were together for just under 10 years. My daughter was born in 2004. I already had a son from a previous relationship, he was much older. I've always had a good relationship with him.

So, you bonded with your daughter in the same way?

When my daughter was born, she was the daughter that every dad wants. I was very close to her and she was very close with me. She was only young when we were last hanging out together but she spent a lot of time with me. I even took her to work meetings with me if I knew the client. She loved being outdoors. I have an Italian background; she was very tanned and loved

the sun. I used to take her everywhere, she had a big million-dollar smile. We lived along the water so I'd take her for lots of walks.

When did things start to go wrong in your relationship?

It was 2006/2007 things when I first noticed things weren't right. You get a feeling, you just know when something's not quite right. There was the pressure of living, like most couples have. We'd just bought a property, which was over a million dollars, so a lot of pressure there. I was working hard, and she wasn't working for a while. There was one particular night that sticks in my mind. I'd recently got her a job in banking industry. She'd started working and they had their Christmas party on.

Did you go to the party together?

No, that was the thing. She said it was no partners. I knew that wasn't the way the organisation worked.

What did you say?

I let it go. I stayed home and was looking after my daughter. She left at 7pm and didn't get home until 4am. She drove there, so I knew it wasn't because she'd been drinking. She arrived home, had a shower and went to bed. The next morning, she was very stand offish and distant. I could see there was something wrong with her. She kept going to the toilet, kept being sick. It wasn't until further down the road, I realised it was guilt. The guilt of coming home to her husband and her daughter, and the thought of where she'd been out until 4am, made her physically sick.

Did you challenge her and ask her what was going on?

I didn't have time to; very soon after she asked if I could leave and move in with a friend.

What was her explanation?

She said she needed time to think.

Do you remember that day?

Yes. It was February 2008. That day, she told me that she loved me but wasn't in love with me. She said she was going to arrange divorce papers.

How did you react to that?

I told her that I knew the financial burden

a separation could take. So I said, 'Let's make a private arrangement, let's do a deal, we'll sell the house, pay back the bank, you can have what's left, and I can see my daughter once a fortnight.'

And that's what you did?

Yes. For a few months it was ok. But sometimes when she'd come to pick up our daughter I noticed marks on her neck. I won't go into detail, but I knew she'd been with a man. The guy turned out to be her boss.

Did you have the agreement in writing?

No, and I regret that now. When I look back I wish I had. But, at the time, I thought we'd been together for 10 years and there was trust there.

But there wasn't trust, was there?

No. One weekend, I turned up and no one was around. I waited 20 minutes, then the next door neighbour came out and said, 'who are you looking for?' I said I was looking for my daughter and her mother. I was told they'd gone.

Just like that? That's how you found out?

Yes. I was told they'd left.

And when was that, Peter?

That was 13 years ago.

And you haven't seen your daughter in all those years?

No. I haven't seen her. I haven't heard from her. I heard rumours she was here or there, but I didn't know if they were true. I heard she went interstate. I don't believe they went overseas. I know she's back in Sydney now.

Looking back now can you see signs you missed at the time?

Hey, listen, we weren't perfect. But I wasn't a drinker, I wasn't a gambler, I didn't leave her alone to go out or anything.

Can you tell me how that's impacted your mental health?

In March 2008 – and I've had a lot of men reach out to me after I first talked about this – I couldn't cope anymore. I didn't want to work. I went to that dark place. I drove my car out west to St Mary's I parked my car. I wrote a suicide note, I wrote to my daughter and I tried to overdose.

This is all part of your inspirational talk?

Yes, I live stream events. It's become my purpose to share my experience. I believe in God, and it's strange because I took those tablets, and my specialist said when they found me and pumped my stomach, I should have died. My specialist said, 'Someone up there's looking out for you'. That's why I do what I do now.

You've found other men in similar positions – and a lack of support?

Absolutely. And COVID lockdowns are adding extra strain. I'm hearing so many stories of men cut off from their kids and I know how that feels. I know what it's like to go to that dark place.

Can you explain how it feels?

You think it can't change. You react to that, and then your body reacts to that and everything shuts down. I teach people to respond not to react to circumstance. Respond don't react.

And you apply that to your daughter?

It's been 13 years since I saw my daughter. There's not a day that goes by that I don't think about her – birthdays, Christmas, Easter, Mother's Day... of course I think about her. Of course, sometimes I cry thinking about her.

There were no organisations that could help you?

I went to Dads in Distress, I was referred by one of the pastors at church. But the issue I had was this; I went and I had a lady to talk to. I started sharing my story, telling her how much I missed my daughter. She said, 'You've got to understand that daughters need their mothers'. I sat back and thought, 'What? Are you saying mums are more important than fathers?' I wasn't there saying I wanted full custody; I was saying I want to see my daughter. And your response to that is, 'You've got to understand that daughters need this mothers'?

What did you do?

I said, 'I'm sorry to waste your time' and I walked out. I'm not having a go at mothers; I'm asking that fathers be shown some respect too. This is why today we have such an issue with youth crime, and drugs, when parents split up, there's not a fatherly figure. There's no male role model to show them, to explain when they make the wrong choices. I deal with suicidal young people; I've spoken at schools and

organisations. I know their problems, because they share them with me.

Tell me how other life experiences have influenced your thinking?

In 2014, I was diagnosed with terminal cancer. I was told how long I had to live. I was told I would never walk again. I had multiple myeloma, which is a blood cancer. The reason I'm alive today and I'm walking and cancer free, is because the night of 23 July 2014 when I was told, I thought, 'No, I'm not going to die, I need to see my daughter'. It was my reason to stay alive.

Your daughter was your purpose?

Yes! Everyone needs a purpose, a reason and your body then responds to that. It's the process of self-healing; it's why I'm still here after seven years.

Tell me the story about the lawyer who came to one of your talks in Sydney.

This was one of those incredible moments. When I did my last speaking event in Sydney, before COVID, there was a man in the audience



**I'M NOT
HAVING A GO
AT MOTHERS;
I'M ASKING
THAT FATHERS
BE SHOWN
SOME
RESPECT TOO**

who emailed me three days afterwards. I received this email saying, 'Your event was amazing, it was life-changing. I'm a lawyer and I want to help you get your daughter back, free of charge, That's how this latest investigation all started. I know that at some point, I will be giving my talk, and my daughter will be sitting there in the audience, I just know it.

You have such inner strength...

My story is intense, over years and years, I've been to hell and back. Now, I want to share my experience to help others. I want to teach others how to respond not react. I want to share my positive mindset.



THIS IS THE PROBLEM WE'VE GOT; NO POLITICIANS HAVE THE GUTS TO TACKLE THESE ISSUES

You must have moments of weakness?

Of course. Sometimes I cry, of course I do. Then I ask myself, what's the alternative? In 2008 I tried that alternative. I believe that God kept me alive to give others hope; even cancer patients, I give them hope. I can do that because I understand what it's like. When I tried to commit suicide, I know it got back to my ex, because we do have mutual friends, and they said to her, 'Don't you dare let him see her now, he's unstable.' That was never the case. At that point, my dad had just passed away from cancer. Everything around me was crumbling. Now I know that life will show things to you at certain times, and you either react or respond. I know I need to get out there and I need to share my story because it can save someone's life.

Your dad died from cancer and then you faced your own diagnosis?

Yes. I overcame being told I was going to die from terminal cancer. You know, I took my dad to the hospital when he was diagnosed. He kept saying to me, 'I'm going to die, aren't

I?' I kept saying to him, don't say that, but he was a typical Italian man. I know that I've saved lives through sharing my story. They've written to me and said, 'I was going to end my life, then after hearing you, I've started taking action to turn my life around'. That's what keeps me going.

So your daughter was four years old when you last saw her?

Yes. She's now 17. It will be amazing to have her back in my life. It will happen.

Your social media is filled with positivity...

Sometimes, as you go through life, you go through challenges and sometimes you win, because you're able to share with others and help them get through it. Racism, getting bullied, I grew up with that. I'm here to tell you that no matter what happens in life, if you do not control circumstances around you, they will control you. When I tried to end my life, I had to change my attitude. Now, I control my circumstances, I don't let it get me down.

You've been doing your talk on Zoom through COVID?

Yes, I've done schools, via Zoom, all over the country. I recently did one in the US because they're going through tough times over there too.

Do you have times of feeling angry?

There are times when I did feel angry, but that's a reaction. If I get angry, it affects me, it builds up inside my body and it will affect my immune system. A large reason that people get sick is because something like stress or anger, has sat in their body, and it does so much damage to your body.

You see the connection between men who can't see their children and male suicide?

Yes, I see it. Unfortunately, fathers who don't see their kids, they feel this incredible loss. That's why there's so much male suicide.

What do you say to men who want to give up?

Things can change. You have to ride that wave; you can't drown, because then you'll never know what it's like to walk on the sand again.

Did you study before becoming an inspirational speaker?

No! I have nothing against these people who study, go to university, get loads of

qualifications, but they've never been in the trenches. When you write a suicide note, and you say to your family, 'I'm sorry', that's real. Within 15 minutes you feel the tingling in your body, you know you're about to go. I do so much with men in similar situations, with everything in life that they face.

Have you tried to speak to politicians about these issues?

Yes, but there's so much red tape. You can request to have a debate with a politician and they ask what your topics will be. When I tell them, they say they won't accept your offer. That's it! This is the problem we've got; no politicians have the guts to tackle these issues. When there's a place called Dads in Distress, and a woman talks to me and says you've got to understand, I'm sorry, why aren't you understanding me? Why aren't you hearing me? Unless the father is a drug dealer, a paedophile, unless he's abusive, why on earth are children allowed to be used in this way? Why are children being used as weapons? Why are our kids being used as shields?

And politicians won't fight?

Politicians are gutless on this issue, 100 per cent they are. I'm sorry, this is too important, I'm not going to be part of political correctness. I'm 59 years old, I'm just saying that I have as much right to see my daughter as my ex-wife. I'm not saying I want full custody, I'm just saying I want to be part of her life as her dad. Now, can someone please tell me, what's the problem? Why are us men, us fathers, treated like second-class citizens? One of the things I teach about leaders is that a good leader is someone who brings out the best in others. I'm trying to do that.

Is mainstream media part of the problem in this area?

Mainstream media, it's all a narrative; they don't want to tell the stories of men's pain. My aim is to shine a light on these issues. It's considered too hard, well, look forward to where we'll be in 20-30 years' time. When my son says to me, 'The world's a mess', I reply, 'No, son, the world's not a mess. It's the people who are messed up. It's the choices. It's the decisions. We have no leaders. If these leaders really want to keep our community safe as we keep hearing, we must start having these conversations. We are missing the big picture. I'm not going to go quietly.' 🗣️

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LIFE AFTER CORONA LOCK- DOWNS

THERE'S A GROWING REALISATION THAT AUSTRALIA HAS
BECOME A VICTIM OF ITS OWN INITIAL SUCCESS HANDLING THE
CORONAVIRUS. LOCKDOWNS ARE OUR NEW NORMAL.
WHAT'S NEXT? ASKS **GIDEON ROZNER**



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I GOT engaged recently. It was my third attempt – my big proposal weekend, more tightly choreographed than Cirque du Soleil, had been scuttled twice by lockdowns. Under the circumstances, we skipped the engagement party.

My fiancée and I were supposed to go to Queensland a week after that, but lockdown five was announced the day before we were supposed to fly out of Melbourne so we never made it. Instead, we settled for our usual ritual – going on that last, defiant pubcrawl before restrictions came into effect. We ended up at some bar on Chapel Street, heaving with people who were thinking the same thing we were, drinking and dancing until the ugly lights came on and everybody dispersed. The 11:59pm swill.

As for planning the wedding, well it's a complicated enterprise at the best of times, but these days even more so – every decision about the flowers or the photographer or our esoteric playlist for the DJ feels tentative, provisional.

Neither of us complains much about it. Lockdowns have become as inevitable as they are inconvenient, like bad weather. This is our life now.

GLADY'S GAME-CHANGER

Everything changed when Gladys caved. I'd always viewed the 'Liberal moderate' premier of New South Wales as suspiciously as the next right-winger, but Berejiklian became an unlikely heroine for lockdown sceptics at the tail end of 2020. She stared down the public health brigade and refused to plunge Sydney into a lockdown over a handful of cases in the Northern Beaches. In the New Year, Gladys became evangelical about the importance of keeping Sydney open, going as far as to admit she 'feared for' the people of lockdown-loving Victoria.

Then in late June, it all got too much. With the media hyperventilating over less than two-dozen cases in Bondi, Berejiklian pulled the trigger on the same 'localised lockdown' that had summarily dealt with the outbreak over Christmas. Three days later, restrictions were extended from the original three local government areas to the entirety of Greater Sydney and beyond.

Within the week, no fewer than three premiers rushed to impose stay-at-home orders over an absurdly small number of cases – bringing the total to 12 million Australian were in lockdown. Not to be outdone, perennial bedwetter Steven Marshall rolled out all manner of nonsensical restrictions in South Australia despite the fact that Australia's original 'free state' had no cases at all.

It was like March 2020 all over again – in fact it, was worse. Fifteen months after 'two weeks to flatten the curve', we were back in the chaotic embrace of government by press conference – a hellish cacophony of confusing and contradictory information coming from all directions.

At least March 2020 had some sort of underlying, linear logic to it. But this was a public policy tower of Babel in which nobody – not the feds, not the premiers, not the regulators, not the 'experts' – seemed to have any idea of what came next. It was lockdown first, ask questions later.

But unlike last year, we didn't have the perverse comfort of knowing that, for better or worse, almost every country in the free world was doing the exact same thing. Visions of the old life were filtering back to us from overseas – photos of overseas friends' holidays abroad, pool parties and beach raves in our Instagram stories, talk of mask-free nirvanas like Miami under Ron DeSantis.

And unlike last year, there was the growing realisation that places like Sweden that didn't lock down – much to the hand-wringing of the public health brigade – did no worse in terms of coronavirus deaths than anywhere else. Anywhere else, that is, except Australia.

Aside from New Zealand and a handful of Asian countries that went through SARS, Australia has – thank God – had the fewest deaths per capita than any other country in the developed world. Scott Morrison shut the borders early – quite possibly his only helpful contribution during this entire saga – and from there, Australia's sparsely populated cities, warm climate and cash-soaked public health system meant that the coronavirus was a downhill battle to begin with.

But somewhere along the line, we started believing our own bullshit. Our blind luck became infused with some notion of Australian COVID-19 exceptionalism; a flawed mythology stoked in no small measure

by politicians praising the cowered populace for their 'hard work' and obnoxious fanfare around 'getting to zero cases'.

And so now the more we cling to that zero, the further we slide into the epidemiological time warp in which Australia is stuck in pandemic mode when the rest of the world is beginning to treat corona as endemic.

And no, vaccination rates won't make a difference. That's not to say vaccines don't have a place – the experience elsewhere is that they do decrease hospitalisations and deaths, dramatically it seems. But the promise that 'this will only go on until everyone is vaccinated' is about as illusory



CREDIT: MARK KRIEDEMAN / MORRISON



“IT WAS LOCKDOWN FIRST, ASK QUESTIONS LATER”

as ‘two weeks to flatten the curve’ was.

The political class have shifted the goal posts too many times on this. I don’t trust them now. But more to the point, even with the recent outbreaks hospitalisation, rates in Australia are low. If they were driven down a few percentage points lower on account of the vaccines, would anyone notice or care? Maybe they would, and maybe they wouldn’t, but that’s not the main game. Reports from overseas indicate that although deaths have plummeted, case numbers haven’t been affected and unfortunately, that’s the one metric everyone here seems to be focused on.

Even with the vaccine, there will still be cases. And that means that there will still be daily announcement of case numbers and the ensuing media hullabaloo. There will still be endless talk of outbreaks and clusters and rolling case averages and exposure sites and primary close contacts and fleeting encounters and contaminated pizza boxes. And so long as politicians have that trusty panic button within reach, there’ll still be lockdowns as well.

LOCKDOWN FLIPSIDE

Here’s my dirty, shameful little secret: I’ve started to like being locked down. Touring

the bars the night before has taken on the same kind of confected exuberance of New Year’s Eve. Waking up the next day feels like the first day of school holidays when I was a kid – the prepubescent luxury of weeks at home in one’s jamies.

I don’t bother watching the interminable press conferences anymore. They’ve long become predictable, bleeding together like reruns of a sitcom you’ve seen a thousand times before. Nowadays, I just turn on Sky News for a couple of hours in the morning, but once I’ve gotten the gist of whatever the daily horror show brings I turn it off and get back to my desk, writing in peace

“NOBODY SEEMS TO CARE THAT THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE LOST THE MOST FROM LOCKDOWNS HAD THE LEAST TO BEGIN WITH”

as the horrible chaos of the real world unfolds somewhere beyond the safety of my apartment. Trekking as far as the shops across the road is a burden. Going back to the office the handful of times I’m rostered on feels almost alien.

I rarely get around to exercising. Unopened envelopes are piled up on my desk. My phone is bursting with unread text messages, emails, direct messages on social media. Sometimes I go a couple of days without showering. I’m a good month or two overdue for a haircut, but there never seems to be enough time between lockdowns to go to the barber. I’m half a man, a useless bootleg of who I was prior to March 2020 – a life so far in the past now I sometimes struggle to remember it. But I still like being at home.

I’ve become everything I despise – the comfortable ‘knowledge worker’, insulated from the consequences of the lockdowns that have plunged so many others into poverty and despair. I haven’t experienced the brutality of the Centrelink queue, the ruin of my business. Yeah, I can’t go to the pub, but – unbelievably – I’m missing even that less and less.

There are too many people in my situation – the lucky cohort who have the luxury of demanding that we ‘lock down harder’, because whatever that ‘harder’ means is at worst inconvenient, not existential.

The brutal truth is that the misery and deprivation of the coronavirus era has been good to some people. Big business has cashed in as lockdowns have kneecapped their smaller competitors. The wealthy have seen the price of their assets soar off

the back of cheap ‘stimulus’ money being printed in the trillions. The chattering classes have plenty to chatter about, and plenty of time on their hands to do so.

And the people responsible for all this have it especially good – the privileged politicians and bureaucrats who have thrived on their uninterrupted six-figure salaries and their generous overtime allowances and their increased relevance and what I can only assume is the twisted, adrenaline-fuelled rush of near-total control over the lives of millions of people.

The plight of the other half of Australia is little more than an afterthought. For all the political elite’s bleating about ‘inequality’, nobody seems to care that the people who have lost the most from lockdowns had the least to begin with. Among the bottom fifth of income earners, almost half a million jobs have disappeared during the lockdowns. The top fifth saw jobs increase by nearly 200,000. The average wage in the private sector was slashed by over \$1200 in 2020. Public sector workers were given a raise of over \$1500.

And if anyone dares to puncture the obscene lie that ‘we’re all in this together’, then indifference turns to hostility. Complain about petty restrictions and you’re ‘selfish’. Mention the shuttered businesses and you’re accused of ‘putting money before human life’. Question the ‘expert advice’ and you’re a ‘conspiracy theorist’. And if you take to the streets to register your dissent – pursuant to your God-given right to freedom of assembly – then you’re a dangerous lunatic who deserves everything that’s coming to you.



OUR NEW WORLD

As I write this, the magic 8-ball that is Twitter has all signs pointing to a sixth Melbourne lockdown, coming into effect. The papers have been reporting that it is ‘under consideration’ all day. Dubious rumours are swirling around on a handful of group threads I’m on.

We’ve been here before – that same slow-motion finality, the calculated pattern of briefing that is presumably designed to soften up the population in advance. And we know that there’ll be other lockdowns after this one. Like I said, this is our lives now. This is the world now.

CREDIT: DAVID HEWISON / MORRISON



As bad as 2020 was, at least it seemed transient – a bizarre aberration in the norms of democratic governance from which we'd 'snap back'.

This time it's something darker, the slow asphyxiation of a free society that has become too confused and terrified to fight back.

This time, it's becoming permanent. The political class is learning how astonishingly far it can go in dictating the lives of the population. And the paranoid libertarian in me is already wondering what the next liberty-crushing 'emergency' will be.

POLITICAL CRISIS

Lewis Carroll himself couldn't have written anything as nonsensical as public debate in Australia in 2021. Nobody knows what's going on – nobody. Not me, not you, not the people supposedly in charge – not anybody. We're at the mercy of long, violent bureaucratic spasm – a Kafkaesque death spiral chewing through our livelihoods and liberties as it hurtles towards some indeterminate conclusion.

We are no longer in a health crisis, we are in a political crisis. Our governing institutions have failed us, crushed under the weight of an overbearing political elite

whose disdain for fundamental rights and freedoms has been building since long before anyone heard of SARS-CoV-2.

But it cannot last. History shows us that you can suppress human liberty for a while, but not forever. Australians will be free again, as soon as we collectively realise that we have to take back our rights and freedoms instead of waiting for them to be handed back to us.

What that will look like, and when it will happen, is anybody's guess. But in the meantime, lockdown will be in here soon so I'm off to the bars. Another night in the age of corona. ❶

ONLY FOUR MORE WEEKS
OF LOCKDOWN, AND
REMEMBER, WE'RE ALL
IN THIS *TOGETHER*.



GREYER



We Swallowed The Fearmongering

WHILE COVID IS THE ONLY SHOW IN TOWN, WE'VE ROLLED OVER AND ACCEPTED LOCKDOWNS
WHILE WAVING GOODBYE TO OUR FREEDOMS
BY DAVID LEYONHJELM

WHEN a death from COVID is reported, journalists and politicians refer to it as tragic or sad, offering thoughts and prayers (has there ever been a more hackneyed phrase?) to family and friends.

Suicide, on the other hand, is far too awkward to mention. Deaths from alcohol or drug overdose, or intimate partner murder, are rarely deemed tragic or sad. Family and friends might not agree, but there are no thoughts and prayers for them.

Such is the state of things in Australia, where COVID is the only show in town and its suppression or eradication (depending on which state you're in and which politician is in charge) the only thing that matters.

The average age of those dying from COVID is higher than the national life expectancy, yet the debate is about children getting vaccinated. Hospitals and ICUs have huge surge capacity, yet we are constantly told the health system will be overwhelmed. A year and a half since we had a two-week lockdown to flatten the curve, Victoria has suffered over 200 days of lockdown and NSW is not far off it. And despite around half the adult population being vaccinated, there is nothing resembling the UK's Freedom Day on the horizon.

What is genuinely sad, indeed tragic, is that this has been accompanied by the trashing of so many fundamental values. The basic rights we once took for granted have been turned upside down, and many are now saying they no longer recognise their country.

Take freedom of movement: Australia is now locked down tighter than North Korea. On pain of arrest, huge fines and imprisonment, nobody may enter or leave the country or even their state and territory. Millions in Sydney and Melbourne cannot go further than 5km from

their home and, like naughty children, must be home by 9pm. Australians overseas are blocked from returning by quarantine caps or cannot leave again if they do return. For a while it was even a criminal offence to return.

Freedom of religion has also been trashed. Churches and other houses of worship were closed while brothels remained open, church services have been disrupted and worshippers arrested.

Freedom of assembly and the right to protest have been met with brutal force, not unlike the treatment dished out to democracy supporters in Hong Kong. Protesters are vilified by the government and media, although Black Lives

“As a population we allowed them to do it, swallowing their fearmongering and sacrificing freedom for perceived safety”

Matters protests were praised. And, also like Hong Kong, Victoria's parliament is suspended while local government elections in New South Wales are postponed.

Then there's freedom of speech. Who can forget the arrest of a woman in her own home for using Facebook to promote a forthcoming protest?

Perhaps most tragically, our relaxed and laidback culture, in which authority was never taken too seriously, has been transformed. We're now encouraged to dob in our neighbours (and plenty have done so), masks are a symbol of obedience, the military is helping to enforce 'compliance', and police

helicopters broadcast stay-at-home orders. In effect, everything is forbidden unless allowed, and there's not much that is.

We know who is responsible for all this – spineless politicians and the public health mafia who manipulate them, not one of whom has suffered personally from the devastation they have wrought on jobs, careers, education, business and mental health. The voices of those paying the price – people in casual jobs that no longer exist, students unable to complete their studies, parents struggling to educate their children at home, owners of cafes and bars with bills piling up, plus all the others whose life does not fit the model of a work-from-home government employee, are silent or ignored. They are collateral damage in the anti-virus obsession.

But we are also guilty ourselves; as a population we allowed them to do it, swallowing their fearmongering and sacrificing freedom for perceived safety. When they told us we were the envy of the world, we puffed out our chests and believed them. When they said they'd keep us safe if we voted for them, many of us fell for it.

But now, as we think about re-joining the rest of the world, some uncomfortable questions need to be answered. Will we continue to expect the government to keep us feeling safe and protected, irrespective of the cost to our rights and freedom? How much do we actually want free speech, freedom of movement, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, and the right to protest? It is no longer possible to predict the answer with any confidence.

Clearly, we are no longer the country we used to be, or at least what we thought we were.

As Edmund Burke famously said, “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing”. 

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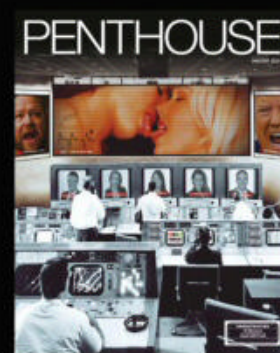
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PHOTOGRAPHER
WADE WHITINGTON







SYDNEY-BASED photographer Wade Whittington prefers to keep it old school; painting the curves of his models with natural light where possible, and taking the time to perfect his shots in-camera rather than relying on post-production. “A great photo to me is all about the light and timing. This is why I still love film so much.”

In fact, Wade says his earliest memories of photography are him as a child, burning through film on disposable cameras. “The content wasn’t anything spectacular but I was always so eager to see what I got back.”

Initially, Wade’s passion for photography stemmed from wanting to document his adventures and give people an insight into life through his

eyes, or lens. “My photography style is quite broad since I shoot at every opportunity I get. Photography not only helps me express myself, but it also encourages my subjects to express how they feel. The final product gives the model a chance to see themselves how they imagined, and that in itself is rewarding.”

Movement features strongly in Wade’s work, which is why he enjoys working with models that have a background in dance or sport. “Being able to incorporate some of their hobbies and skills into the photos of themselves really brings the photos to a whole other level because it makes the subject feel powerful and comfortable in their movement.”

“I show movement in my photos

because it brings emotion and makes something static seem like a scene in your head that you visualise moving. I love the challenge of creating something that you can envision, and making an image feel like you’re stepping into a scene.”

His advice for photographers wanting to pursue nude art photography? “Understand your style and what makes you different. Make sure everyone is on the same page. Get good at the technical aspects of photography before rushing into anything. Once you are, you’ll be able to spend more of your attention focused on the composition and direction of your subject.” **i**

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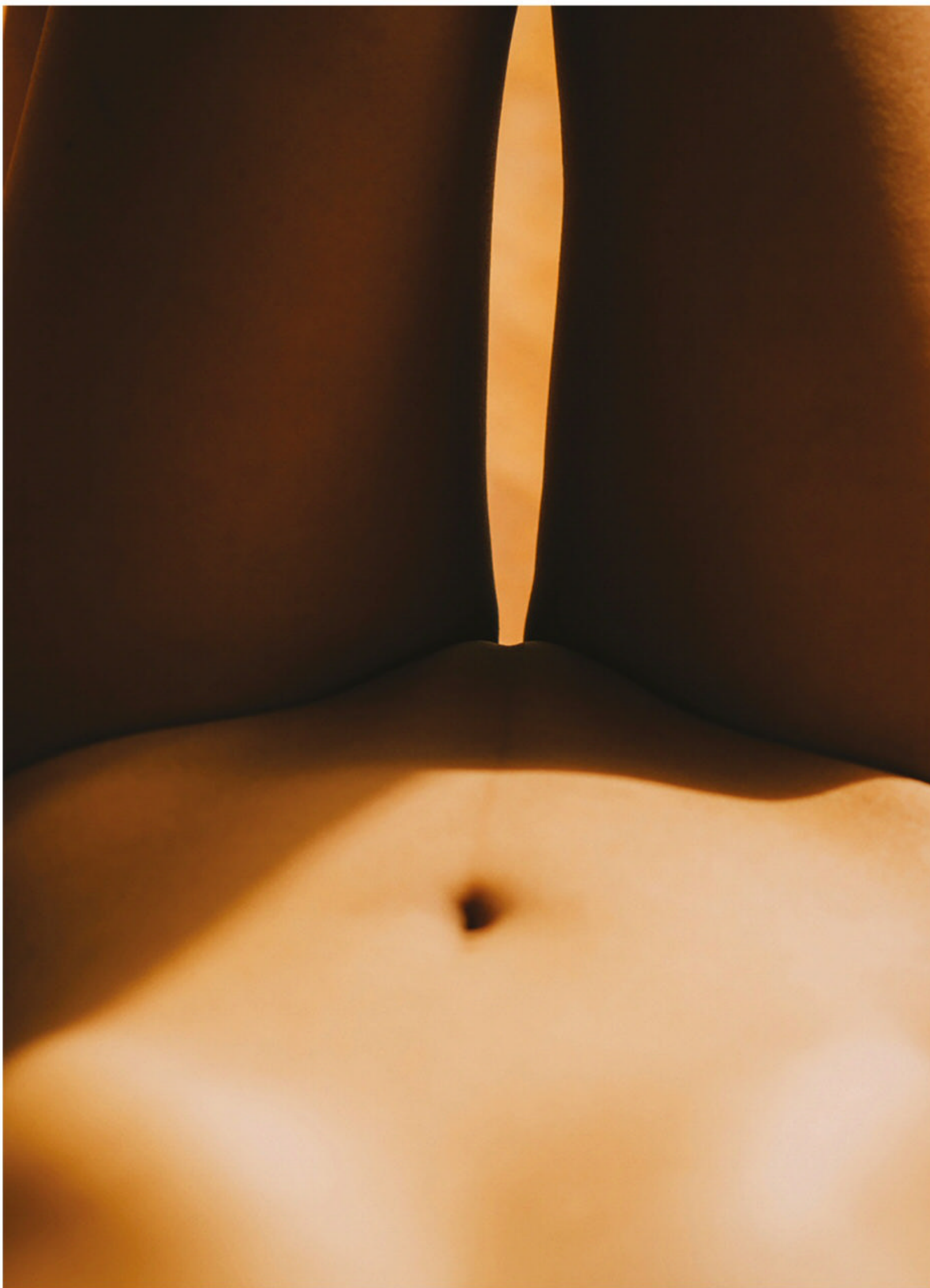


















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LEFT: ARJE CRINKLE COTTON SHORTS SUIT, BARED SNEAKERS,
T-SHIRT VIA ATLAS HOMME, DITA SUNGLASSES.



ABOVE: ARJE CRINKLE COTTON SHORTS SUIT, T-SHIRT VIA ATLAS HOMME, DITA SUNGLASSES.
RIGHT: INFORMALE DRAWSTRING TROUSERS, CONVERSE HI TOP, STRIPED T-SHIRT AND JUNGLE JACKET.







LEFT: THE ANNEX SHIRT AND DRAWSTRING PANTS, BRADOR SANDALS.
ABOVE: THE ANNEX TIE DYE SHIRT.



ABOVE: MR. SIMPLE MILITARY SHORTS AND RIBBED SWEATER, CLAY AUGUST SNEAKERS, HERSCHEL BAG.



THOMAS GEORGE

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APOTHECARIAN SPIRIT

FEELS BOTANICAL

AUSTRALIAN wine producers may have been doing wonderful things with grapes over the years, but Feels Botanical is a little more inventive. And the results are truly extraordinary.

Since its launch in 2019 the Aussie company has been helping us realise that the 'responsible lifestyle' shouldn't be limited to just food, clothing and skin creams. The way we choose and consume our plonk is pretty important too!

Feels Botanical has produced an impressive selection of spirits that are Australian made (and owned), free from

preservatives; vegan-friendly, gluten-free.

Now that all of those boxes are ticked, I hear you wondering if they actually taste any good. Well, the answer is a resounding yes! The Grape over Grain policy has led the company to produce four standout bottles that use the famous fruit along with a variety of other plants to stimulate your tastebuds.

First up is one of its more popular go-to's, Bask. Distilled from Australian grapes, with a touch of Quandong, Kakadu Plum and Hemp, it's ideal over a bit of ice mixed with Mediterranean tonic and has a silky smooth texture. This aperitif also

landed Feels Botanical the bronze medal at the 2021 International Spirit and Wine competition. High praise indeed.

Vivify is another popular choice, for those who like the sweetness of coconut coupled with a touch of ginger. Then there is Rouse, which contains the wonderfully named 'Horny Goat Weed', and Revel, which has hints of Ginseng, Coffee and Illawarra Plum.

What Feels Botanical has managed to do with this selection is reinvent the way we think about and consider alcohol, making it more of an enjoyable discovery and less about what you already know. **i**



STYLE TAILOR-MADE

THOM MORISON



IF YOU'RE not already aware of the name Thom Morison, then listen up! The pattern maker is based out of Auckland, New Zealand and is currently turning heads aplenty with his highly stylish, minimal clothing designs that are tailor-made for the modern man.

His studio on Great North Road is not just a design

sanctuary but also a test centre for every garment developed. He creates and wears every piece, meaning that collections are built upon rather than arriving in one big drop. This process ensures his creations are as comfortable as they are pleasing on the eye.

Everyday wear is definitely the concept Morison is riding. From T-Shirts and Knit Wear to Bottoms and

Outerwear, his studio has you covered whatever the colour of the sky may be.

Trousers are a particular standout within Morison's considered collection. His Single Pleat Moleskin' and Elastic Trouser (Fawn Herringbone) are about as on trend as it gets and marry perfectly with tees and classic sneakers for that on-point smart-casual vibe.

There is an essence of tradition mixed with modern cuts throughout his work, offering looks that lends themselves to both urban and natural surroundings. And speaking of being natural, Thom Morison fabrics are sustainably sourced to the highest possible standards, with each piece being hand-sewn by local Kiwi ateliers. Big tick! **1**





LIVING

FURNITURE BY DESIGN: CULTKA



GETTING a good piece of retro furniture is becoming harder and harder these days. Prices start to get silly and that's before you even think about the little bits of restoration you may have to undertake. And, once in situ, then you wonder whether the piece was actually worth it in the first place.

CULTKA is slowly going about changing these little problems whilst providing some pretty stunning pieces inspired by mid-century designs; something that says just as much about you as the period it comes from.

Realising that comfort and price don't always go hand in hand, the designers have created a range of chairs and sofas that tick all the boxes, offering changes to living spaces without breaking the bank.

Inspired by the designs of Mario Bellini, an Italian architect who created the world's first modular sofas, the CULTKA Custom could be the centrepiece for any large living room. You can choose the colours and size that work for your space, with comfort never being questioned.

If you're after something a little smaller for a studio apartment or second living room, then take a peek at the CULTKA Sofas range. They stay in line with the bulbous designs of Bellini but for more petite needs.

Some of the more daring designs in the CULTKA catalogue, however, come in the form of chairs. The LC7 in Nude replica is as simple as it is beautiful, whilst the Bidendum vintage leather seats are so sought-after there aren't any left!

If you're looking to add a special piece to your living space that will make you grin each time you walk through the door, then CULTKA has an option that exceeds your expectations. **1**



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FUTURE IN MOTION

MG E-MOTION CONCEPT CAR



WE'RE all thinking about E-Cars these days and which one might be our first.

There are more and more on the road, which means there are more manufacturers tapping into our carbon-free wishes.

MG has entered the market with the new E-Motion concept car, which should be another feather in the cap for those defending electronic vehicle performance.

This grand tourer accelerates to 100kmh in just four seconds, and can easily do up to 500km on a full charge. Its curvy exterior

and sporty grille will leave few questioning whether or not it lives up to petrol-aided versions style-wise.

Whereas the model is undoubtedly good news for eco-conscious travellers, it's also great news for MG. The company has struggled to keep up with its European counterparts over the past

couple of decades, so this is seen as its major come back.

According to reports, the E-Motion car will be available to the global market by late 2021. There is also positive news on the price. Models are expected to go for as little as \$53,000. Not bad for a brand new grand tourer! **1**



CLASSIC UPGRADE

ROLEX DATEJUST 36

If you're in the market for a timeless timepiece from one of the best watchmakers on the planet, then Rolex has a new gem waiting to be wrapped around your wrist.

Never shy of exquisite attention to detail, the Suisse masters have come up with a modern, 2021 version of their 1945 classic – Datejust

36. At \$10,600 it's not within everyone's budget, but for those who search perfection and elegance, as well as showing others that they have a pretty penny or two, it ticks all the boxes.

An olive green palm motif dial sits within a 36mm Oyster case, which is fitted with a domed bezel. It is held against the wrist with an Oystersteel

Bracelet that is highly resistant to corrosion so that your watch will stay in good nick whether you're at the office or out enjoying an afternoon sailing excursion.

A day-night function means that the dials on the face become fluorescent in lower light, whilst a cyclops lens magnifies the date just left of the third hour.

Features include a perpetual, mechanical self-winding movement with a 70-hour power reserve, meaning beauty on the outside and in.

If you are serious about splashing out on a piece of modern engineering beauty, the new Rolex Datejust 36 may just be the type of time-spanning accessory you're looking for. **1**

NATIVE ESSENCES

GOLDFIELD & BANKS

COMBINING the expertise of master French ‘parfumeurs’ with some of Australia’s most authentic essences, Goldfield & Banks has it all when it comes to sensory pleasure.

It chooses ingredients rarely used in the industry to create standout fragrances that are a hit at home as well as overseas.

What started as a bit of niche has turned into somewhat of a trend set, integrating herbs, citruses and plants indigenous to Australia to deliver scents that are as

intriguing as they are pleasurable to note.

Although many of its offerings are pleasing to the nose, there are a couple of fragrances that jump to the fore. ‘Bohemian Lime’ uses Australian Finger Lime, Sandalwood Australia and Vetiver Haiti to deliver a tropical, citrusy burst that is inspired by the coastal haze of Byron Bay.

If you fancy something with a deeper, muskier scent, then ‘Wood Infusion’ is the option for you. Ingredients include Australian Exotic Woods, Sweet Orange

and Australian lavender, creating a wood infusion with close links to Fraser Island and the Pacific Ocean.

Staying in line with many major perfume houses today, the Goldfield & Banks range is completely unisex meaning they are made for both men and women.

Another innovative touch is the bottle sizes you can purchase. You can go for the standard 100ml or 50ml options as well as a practical little travel sprays for those who like to mix up their aroma when on the move. **1**





2021 BRIONI COLLECTION

BRIONI X BRAD PITT



IF YOU'RE looking for a seriously elegant wardrobe that marries bespoke Italian tailoring with one of Hollywood's most stylish icons, then this Brioni x Brad Pitt collab will leave you salivating.

The luxury Italian House has created a collection based around the actor's 'laidback' style, and the end products are quite outstanding.

Pitt has been the face of Brioni since 2019, regularly sporting sharp, finely tailored suits on the red carpet. But this is

the first time he has had more of a hands-on role, with a final say on design.

The results have certainly caught our attention and there is something for most occasions. For starters, there is a delightful 'Virgilio Shawl Lapel' evening jacket that could be fit for a royal banquet. It is the epitome of masculine elegance, blending perfectly with a fine white cotton evening shirt and dickey bow.

Looking for a piece to keep you warm during a luxury winter retreat? Then the

BP Signature Black and White Cashmere Silk High-Neck will have your dinner guests thinking you have just walked off one of Pitt's film sets.

It's not all about fashion for wining and dining when it comes to this immaculate collab, however. Check out the Washed Silk Saba Trousers for proof. These carrot leg shaped pants are ideal for a (slightly) more rugged boot and white t-shirt look for those days when the sun peeps through the clouds but style is still of the highest order. **1**



LUXURIOUS AND LOUD

PALM ANGELS X VILEBREQUIN

COLLABORATIONS. Everyone is at it these days. And, long may it continue. No one could possibly have pictured outlandish LA Skate brand Palm Angels trading ideas with Vilebrequin, a St Tropez swim short stalwart. But that is exactly what we have here, and the similarities have started to become clear.

Both of these brands are about luxury that screams out expression. Whether you're in downtown LA or sailing through the Med, you still need and want to be seen, right?

The collaborative collection as you may have guessed, centres around shorts. It's playful, it's colourful, it's everything you want and more. From camouflage

colours to those who favour Palm Angels, to beautiful teddy bears for those who like the extrovert French touch, there's something for all.

Each pair features a Palm Angels/Vilebrequin logo on the front of the waistband just in case others aren't sure about the quality you have wrapped around your bum.

As well as appealing to the eye, this collab is appealing

to the planet conscious. All shorts are made from 100 per cent recycled polyamide meaning less environmental impact.

For such a sought-after pair of boardies, you'll be looking at upward of 400 euros, and the fact that this is a one-off venture means you're not likely to see that price drop. Maybe grab a pair before they all go? **i**

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INGREDIENTS



IT'S simple to say that Myriam and Eric, the couple behind Ingredients, were decades ahead of the rest of us when it comes to living a healthy life. When they met in Miami in the early nineties, they discovered they were both vegan (pretty rare back then) and shared a passion for the greener aspects of life. Move forward to 2021, and they are the creative force behind a company that promotes toxic-free

living, and one of their products is causing quite a stir for men who like to moisturise. Ingredients Body Oil is a lightweight, organic hydration aid that helps restore the skin's natural elasticity. This means that it keeps the right balance and texture that reduces dryness and overall ageing. It's made using only 100 per cent natural oils and extracts such as Jojoba, Baobab, Copaiba

and Vanilla to give your face and body a thorough revitalisation each and every day. It's also filled to the brim with omegas, vitamins and antioxidants that repair as well as protect. Once you start to use Body Oil you will quickly reap the benefits and feel a difference to your skin within days. At only \$59 a bottle, it's a genuinely affordable way to keep your skin feeling a million dollars. ❶

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ART OF THE NUDE

GET AWAY FROM IT ALL



PHOTOGRAPHER
TROY FREYEE

MODEL
MADDIE NEVILLE







WHEN you need to get away from it all, nothing beats ditching the city for a getaway to a cosy cabin secluded in the bush to soothe the soul.

Afterall, what could be better than ditching your deadlines, leaving WiFi behind and spending the weekend shacked up in a countryside cabin with gorgeous company?

If you're feeling a bit burnt out, this set shot by photographer Troy Freyee of the gorgeous Maddie Neville in the Gold Coast hinterland is guaranteed to charge up your batteries.

What do you enjoy about nude modelling?

I've always been drawn to minimalism, and when it comes to photography and modelling, I've always loved the vulnerability that comes with nudity. It's just you, your body, your environment and the camera - no material distraction. The power and emotion that can show through these moments in time, the shapes we can make with our bodies and the confidence women can find in doing

nude modelling is something that no other style of modelling or photography can beat, for me anyway. There are stories in the details of our bodies that no pretty dress or handbag will ever be able to match.

Do you find nudity empowering?

My favourite saying is 'modesty empowers some, and nudity empowers others'. Both of which are totally okay and should be more widely accepted. My answer though is HELL YES! Loving and accepting your body in its most pure raw form is one of the most empowering feelings ever.

How was your *Penthouse* shoot with Troy Freyee?

Oh my god, this shoot was a DREAM! We shot at the most beautiful little cottage tucked away in the Gold Coast hinterland, it was seriously something out of a fairy tale. The team made me feel so comfortable and at ease, it barely even felt like we were shooting. We spent the afternoon hanging out, laughing, painting, getting warm by the fire then getting steamy in the bath tub - all the things you'd want from a little getaway.

You're also a photographer...

[Laughs] Yes! I am! I started up film photography @honeysonfilm_ about a year and a half ago and haven't looked back. My work is definitely focussed around the female body and creating normalisation and appreciation around the differences in all of us. As with modelling, I am very drawn to skin and minimalism within my photography. If my model comes away feeling good about herself after the shoot, then my job is done and I'm a happy lady!

What do you enjoy doing when you aren't working?

I love being outdoors and in nature. I'm a sucker for a good camping weekend and some 4WD driving. I'm always by the ocean, I love surfing, going on bike rides and just spending time in the sun. Anything active and outdoors - animals are a bonus. No reception always goes down nicely too! 📶

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FEATURE

CHINA'S WINE REVOLUTION

OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, CHINA HAS TRANSFORMED A BARREN STRETCH
OF LAND INTO ONE OF THE WORLD'S BEST WINEMAKING REGIONS
BY MATTEO FAGOTTO. PHOTOS BY MATILDE GATTONI



ABOVE: WINE CELLAR OF CHATEAU COPOWER JADE,
ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF YINCHUAN

CONVERSATIONS about China's progress as a nation have often become heated and politically focused. There are other stories about China's growth, which aren't being told. On the outskirts of Yinchuan, the capital Ningxia is a burgeoning wine region. The province of Ningxia has been producing top-quality wines for almost a decade, thanks to a combination of perfect weather conditions, good soil and a group of talented owners and winemakers.

Now, the region boasts more than 40,000 hectares of vines and 200 wine estates, as well as top international investors. As their learnings develop, and producers tour the world to learn new techniques, the wine is increasingly being sold into top hotels and restaurants not just in China, but abroad in wine-loving France, Japan, Canada, Hong Kong and more. Chinese ambition comes in all sorts of flavours, as we found out when we visited the region.

NINGXIA, CHINA

The morning sun is already high in the translucent sky and a gentle, chilling breeze sweeps the endless plains on the outskirts of Yinchuan, the capital of Ningxia.

As the mist slowly evaporates, exposing a breathtaking view of the rugged Helan Mountains, scores of women dressed in jeans, light jumpers and colourful veils crouch along rows of vines, expertly cutting the dark-coloured, ripe grapes and collecting them in green plastic cases.

It's harvest time, the most important period of the year in this small autonomous region at the gate of the Gobi desert.

Looking at Ningxia's majestic peaks and orderly vines stretching as far as the eye can see, it's difficult to imagine that a little more than 20 years ago the region was just a forlorn stretch of sand inhabited by subsistence farmers.

"When I was a kid I used to dig holes in the desert. I would hide there and play together with my friends," remembers 43-year-old Ren Yanling, sitting in her laboratory during a rare break.

This energetic, hardworking woman was born in the village of Yuquanying, close to the Helan Mountain vineyard, where she now works as Chief Winemaker for the famous French multinational Pernod Ricard. "When I was 15 I would sneak out to have a sip of the wine my parents were making," she recounts laughing. "My parents didn't allow me to drink, but I really enjoyed it."

FROM POVERTY TO WINE FRONTIER

Sharp, confident and with a characteristic penetrating gaze, Ren is part of a group of strong-willed, talented owners, winemakers and managers who are leading China's wine revolution. Thanks to their vision and



commitment, what was once a poverty-stricken rural province has turned into winemaking's new frontier.

Nowadays Ningxia hosts more than 40,000 hectares of vines and more than 200 wineries, the majority of them small boutique estates focused on high-quality vintages with an average production of less than 100,000 bottles per year each.

Ningxia's wines have already won several prestigious international competitions and are sold in top restaurants, hotels and stores from Europe to Australia, from North America to Dubai, Hong Kong and the UK.

Their success is the harbinger of a new, self-confident China willing to confront the rest of the world.

Yet the beginnings of this wine revolution weren't really promising.



REN YANLING, CHIEF WINEMAKER AT PERNOD RICARD'S HELAN MOUNTAIN WINERY



ABOVE: IN 2018, CHINA INAUGURATED A WINE TRAIN CONNECTING THE COUNTRY'S CAPITAL BEIJING TO THE WINE-PRODUCING REGION OF NINGXIA TO PROMOTE THE HELAN EAST MOUNT HILL WINE REGION

BELOW: THE VINEYARDS OF CHATEAU MIHOPE SPREAD ALL THE WAY TO THE HELAN MOUNTAINS





SEASONAL WORKERS HARVESTING THE
GRAPES AT HELAN QINGXUE VINEYARD



**“WHAT
WAS ONCE
A POVERTY-
STRICKEN
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**“THEIR
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TO CONFRONT
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OF THE
WORLD”**



WORKERS SORTING GRAPES OUTSIDE THE PERNOD RICARD WINERY

A WINE TASTING ROOM AT THE CHATEAU CHANGYU MOSER XV,
ONE OF THE MOST IMPRESSIVE WINERIES OF NINGXIA





ZHOU SHUZHEN



China's modern relationship with wine has developed only since the 80s when the government decided to discourage the widespread consumption of baijiu, the traditional grain-based liquors that were diverting millions of tons of precious staple food for the production of alcohol.

Chinese state officials started praising the health benefits of wine instead, while technicians and agrarians travelled to Europe to acquaint themselves with a product nobody was really familiar with.

"At that time, China was producing a blend of grape juice, sweetener and alcohol. It wasn't exactly wine," remembers Zhou Shuzhen, a distinguished 58-year-old woman who was one of the first winemakers of the region and now works for several estates, including the award-winning Kanaan winery. A former schoolteacher, in 1983 Zhou was part of a group of nine people selected for a pioneering winemaking course in the city of Changli, where she participated in one of the first vinification experiments in contemporary China.

"It was a dry red wine. We were using some local varieties of grapes but we were not very familiar with fermentations," recounts the woman with the thoughtful smile of someone who has come a long way. "The result was a very alcoholic and harsh wine. The colour was very dark but it didn't have much flavour."

The wine was presented to a local government official who deemed it disgusting, comparing it to soy sauce. The disappointed winemakers quickly got rid of it, exchanging it with some apricots at a local market.

DECADES OF DEVELOPMENT

Despite these initial setbacks, the wine industry in Ningxia continued to develop over the following decades, under the direction of the provincial authorities. Land was being reclaimed from the desert and planted with vines and grapes imported from Europe, while water from the nearby Yellow River provided the necessary irrigation for the crops.

Wine producers were granted discounted land leases and started hiring foreign consultants, while the local government offered support with scholarships for oenology studies and hosted several international wine competitions.

These concerted efforts slowly started to pay off: Ningxia's wine boomed around the year 2007 and is now the region's second biggest industry after coal.

"I have never seen anything like this anywhere else before. The speed of development here is simply amazing," explains José Hernández González, a 39-year-old Spanish oenologist who has worked in Ningxia since 2012.

NINGXIA'S RED WINE BOOM

Although China boasts several wine-producing regions, Ningxia has been identified by local and international experts as the best one due to an exceptional combination of sandy and dry terrain, high altitude, long sunshine hours and low precipitation, which significantly reduce the need for pesticides. Around 90 per cent of the region's production focuses on red, with cabernet sauvignon as the most popular variety (others include merlot, marselan, malbec, shiraz, pinot noir and, for white wine, chardonnay and Italian riesling). The quality is surprisingly good considering that the industry is very young and that most of the vines are less than 20 years old.

What Ningxia wines still lack in complexity and structure is compensated by their fruitiness, freshness and minerality, which could become the region's defining characteristics.

Today, Ningxia is abuzz with pioneers hoping to turn wine into the next gold rush, just like in the legendary Wild West. Some of the region's wineries are prefabricated metal cubes opened by aficionados with limited means but a serious passion for wine, while others are grandiose chateaux built in classic French style. Among the latter is Changyu Moser XV, an impressive €70-million fairytale castle surrounded by 66 hectares of vineyards and featuring a cinema and a wine museum.

The winery is a joint venture between Changyu, China's oldest wine producer, and chief winemaker Lenz Maria Moser, the 64-year-old descendant of one of Austria's most famous winemaking families. "I am deeply convinced that, over time, we can really produce world class wines here," explains Moser, who wants to turn Changyu Moser XV into one of the world's best wineries in just a few years time. "Our products are already sold in more than

25 countries and we want to go even more global. China needs to benchmark itself internationally in order to be successful on the home front.”

Yet weather conditions and high costs can make wine production in Ningxia particularly challenging. With temperatures as low as minus 27 degrees Celsius, vines have to be buried in winter and unburied in spring in order to survive – a costly and risky process that kills between three and five per cent of plants every year.

Climate aside, almost all the equipment has to be imported from Europe, from grape-sorting and pressing machines to bottling lines, barrels and corks. Labour is extremely expensive as well, especially during harvest, when all the wineries need pickers at exactly the same time.

As a result, Ningxia medium- and high-end wines cost hundreds of euros per bottle and are much more expensive than their European counterparts, which is why several local wineries still struggle with sales. “Ningxia wine is good but difficult to promote,” confirms 41-year-old Sun Qiuxia, the manager of a newly opened wine cellar in Yinchuan. “We are very young and we need time to learn how to do things properly. It took Europe hundreds of years to understand how to produce and market good wine.”

GLOBAL HEAVYWEIGHT INVESTORS

Despite these hiccups, the local wine boom has attracted heavyweights such as French luxury conglomerate LVMH (the owner of Moët & Chandon), and Midea, one of China’s biggest manufacturers of electric appliances. Hong Kong-based oil company Copower and the Thai-Chinese food giant Daysun have also joined the race.

Chen Deqi, the visionary 64-year-old president of Daysun and owner of Ho-Lan Soul, Ningxia’s biggest organic winery, plans to build 30 more chateaux in the next 10 years. The whole complex will occupy 6,700 hectares and will include artificial lakes, exhibition centres, several hotels, a ski resort and a section of the Great Wall. The project is expected to cost a staggering €758 million, but Chen doesn’t seem concerned. “The conditions to grow grapes here are better than in Bordeaux and the market is constantly growing,” he explains during a visit to Ho-Lan Soul state-of-the-art cave, lit

by futuristic purple spotlights. “The world’s biggest wine market will soon be China.”

EDUCATING THE CHINESE PALATE

While China is already the sixth largest producer and the fifth largest consumer of wine in the world, its average per capita wine consumption is only 1.7 bottles per year. Despite the government’s efforts, baijiu and beer remain the country’s favourite alcoholic beverages. Ningxia’s boutique wines are slowly making their way into the main cities but Chinese palates are still not accustomed to wine and educating them might take time.

“Promoting our wines involves a lot of tastings, dinners and word of mouth,” confirms Gao Yuan, the 43-year-old co-owner of Silver Heights, one of the most well-known vineyards in Ningxia. Gao started producing wine in 2007 on a one-hectare property bought with her mother’s lifetime savings. She managed to fill just 3,000 bottles, but the wine was so good that the wine-distribution company she was working for begged her to resign and produce wine full time.

Today, Silver Heights sells its products to top hotels and restaurants in China, France, Japan, Canada and Hong Kong.

Its story exemplifies the potential of a region where passion, creativity and ambition have resulted in a perfect mix.

As the night prepares to fall on the enchanted plains of Ningxia, the workers return to the wineries carrying cases filled with the precious fruit.

The grapes will immediately be sorted, pressed and put in steel tanks to begin fermentation, the first step into their long journey to become wine. Winemaker Zhou observes the whole process by peering out of a window that overlooks the vines. Although she reckons that Ningxia wines can’t yet match the quality of their French, Italian or American counterparts, she believes the region has all it takes to make a name for itself.

“I feel privileged and proud to witness the stage this industry has reached,” she explains with a soft smile on her face. “More and more Chinese winemakers are touring the world and learning new techniques which help us improve. We still have a long way to go, but I am very confident in our future.”



CHATEAU MIHOPE



GAO YUAN, CO-OWNER OF SILVER HEIGHTS

BELOW: CHEN DEQI, PRESIDENT OF THE THAI-CHINESE FOOD GIANT DAYSUN GROUP AND THE OWNER OF HO-LAN SOUL, THE BIGGEST ORGANIC WINERY IN NINGXIA





**“NOWADAYS
NINGXIA IS
ABUZZ WITH
PIONEERS
HOPING TO
TURN WINE
INTO THE
NEXT GOLD
RUSH”**



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A Bushranger Named Mary

ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S MOST FAMOUS BUSHRANGERS, CAPTAIN THUNDERBOLT, HAD A STRONG FEMALE SIDEKICK. SHE WAS DOING HER THING BEFORE FEMINISM WAS A THING.

BY BEN POBJIE

THERE are many professions that have been traditionally seen as male-dominated: motor mechanic, military strongman, James Bond, etc. But the job of bushranger may be the most stereotypically masculine of all. When we think of bushrangers we tend to think of rough men with big beards and funny hats.

While women were definitely in the minority, they weren't entirely absent in the history of bushranging.

In fact, one of the most famous of all bushrangers owed a good deal of his success to his right-hand woman.

Mary Ann Bugg was born in Gloucester, New South Wales, in 1834, the daughter of an Aboriginal woman and an English convict. A precocious girl, she was married at 14 because these were history times and people were OK with all sorts of horrible stuff. She had one child with her first husband before ditching him and high-tailing it with another man to Bathurst. After having another two kids with her new fellow, leaving him for another man, and having another three kids with him, a somewhat exhausted Mary Ann chanced to meet one Frederick Ward, a ticket-of-leave convict with some big dreams.

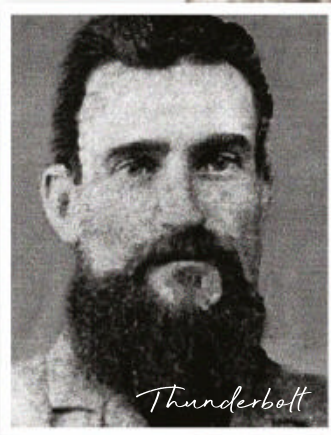
By this time Mary Ann was 26 years old, had borne six children, and was looking for a change.

For a lively young woman with a taste for bad boys, Fred Ward was paydirt.

This was because Ward would, within a few years of hooking up with Mary Ann, become the legendary Captain Thunderbolt, one of Australia's most feared and admired bushrangers. Thunderbolt and his gang cut a swathe through the north and west of NSW for a good seven years, but he wouldn't have been nearly as successful at his chosen profession if it hadn't been for Mary Ann Bugg who, in an early example of how women truly can have it all, combined her duties of wife and mother to a constantly increasing brood of little Thunderbolts with her new career as a bandit.

Mary Ann became the Thunderbolt gang's reconnaissance expert: keeping her man Ward safe by keeping her eyes and ears open and providing advance warning of any danger.

Before Thunderbolt would ride into a town, whether to pull off a job or just to rest up and drink their savings, Mary Ann would go ahead as scout. Townsfolk would see the young woman ride in on her own, dressed like a dashing stockman in moleskin pants, Wellington boots, monkey jacket, cabbage tree hat, and various other items of clothing with bizarre names that people liked to put on in the 1860s. She would check out the town, determine whether there were



“She was married at 14 because these were history times and people were OK with all sorts of horrible stuff”

any troopers about, and report back to her captain.

Mary Ann also took care of the gang's camps, making sure the men were well fed and annoying them by cleaning bits of dirt off their faces with a hankie in front of their friends.

On occasion she ran into trouble with the law, but each time managed to extricate herself through cunning and a little bit of luck. Once she was arrested for vagrancy, but was released after questions were asked in Parliament as to what on earth the police were doing arresting a woman, well-known as the non-vagrant gender.

The combination of Captain Thunderbolt's brilliant horsemanship and ruthless criminal ambition with Mary Ann Bugg's sharp eyes and quick wit made the couple an unstoppable bushranging team.

It can be no coincidence that Thunderbolt, with Mary Ann by his side, proved to have a

much longer bushranging career than any other of his ilk – most bushrangers either met their end or got out of the business after a year or two.

Neither can it be a coincidence that after their relationship finally ended – probably because of the Captain's roving eye, Frederick Ward got himself run down and killed. Without Mary Ann, he wasn't half the bushranger he had been with her.

Mary Ann outlived Thunderbolt by more than three decades. She returned to one of the men she had lived with pre-bushranging, having another four children to add to the three she had with Thunderbolt and the six she had before Thunderbolt, making a grand total of far too many. She was 70 years old when she died at Mudgee, NSW. Less than 10 of those years had been spent with Frederick Ward, but to her dying day, she would always be, in her own words, “The Captain's Lady.” 

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COVID Excuses Wearing Thin

PAYING SCHOOL FEES WHILE PARENT'S ARE HOME SCHOOLING? PARCELS MIA. WHAT'S WITH COVID BEING USED AS A BLANKET EXCUSE? ASKS **CAROLINE DI RUSSO**

LIFE before COVID-19 feels like a world away. A universe, even. And when COVID-19 hit, and everything was thrown out of kilter, we all did our bit to keep the show on the road. That's the human condition: we change, adapt, innovate and keep going. And for a long time, we knew we'd have to accept various levels of compromise across all aspects of our lives; but 18 months down the track, COVID-19 adaption has gone from the great push to innovate and manage the virus to the catch-all for excuses.

How many times have you been told that something can't be 'because of COVID-19' without even the tiniest thread of connection?

I've gone from just accepting it, to getting a little miffed.

And I'm not talking about settling for takeaway fine dining; I can live with the celeriac puree being splashed onto the asparagus foam, and the soufflé being a little forlorn and a little less fluffy than usual. Those businesses are doing everything they can to survive, and they are usually the most heavily and directly impacted by restrictions. We should all do what we can to help them get through this nightmare run.

No argument from me.

I'm talking about the public

being expected to pay full tote odds for reduced services, while service staff blithely wave off objections with quips of 'but it's because of COVID-19'. There are many examples where COVID-19 has become the catch all excuse for the clipping, diluting and lessening, often with COVID-19 having, at best, the most tenuous relevance.

The most obvious one is school fees. Why are parents, in lockdown, still paying full school fees when they are the ones homeschooling their own kids? I'm not suggesting they pay no fees, after all teachers still need to be employed and paid. But much of the everyday cost of running schools is now borne by the parents helping their kids make a diorama or do science experiments at home. If kids aren't physically at school, then less cleaning is required and less electricity is used, as are other inputs required to run a school. So why are the fees still the same? Why are parents paying someone else to educate their children when they wind up having to do the bulk of the work themselves anyway?

My personal gripe, though, is with Australia Post which no longer gives a next-day guarantee for Express Post but charges the same price and, in fact, as of 8 September 2021, it is increasing prices on 'all



“We can see 50 feet in bad light when someone is using COVID-19 as their armour against accountability and performance”

services'. Well, it's increasing the prices and using the word 'services' generously. I run an online business and I have not infrequently, had Express Post parcels either fail to launch or do a *Tour de Australie* on the way to their final destination. And if you need help, good luck trying to get a human on the phone. We understand there are less cargo flights but adjust the price accordingly and pick up the phone.

Speaking of flights, let's talk about Qantas. Now, airlines have had a rough trot over the past 18 months so I will give them plenty of slack when it comes to reduced frequency of flights, cancellations and the like. But offering a 'modified' business class service while they charge the same price is taking the proverbial. Why does COVID-19 prevent crew from providing a

drink before takeoff, reducing the menu or leaving crumbs on the floor? Yes, it's a first world problem, and by all means adjust the service but adjust the price and the expectation.

People have been, rightly, willing to compromise. But it's time to start pushing back on those laying it on thick. We can see 50 feet in bad light when someone is using COVID-19 as their armour against accountability and performance.

And we should object; there have been enough victims of COVID-19, we don't want to add customer service to the list. **1**

Caroline Di Russo is a commercial litigator, commentator and columnist. With over 10 years' experience, she specialises in commercial disputes, commercial insolvency and reconstruction.

Rise Of The Eunuchs

GENDER REASSIGNMENT SURGERY HAS BECOME BIG BUSINESS – HOW MUCH OF THIS IS FOR STREET CRED? ASKS ALEXANDRA MARSHALL

HISTORICALLY, losing your bits was a routine hazard. In a world of throbbing masculinity, the powerful found themselves threatened by the girth of rivals and set about pruning them to size. Men have always been obsessed with the tools of procreation. Our civilisation is littered with dick-based graffiti, adorning everything from the streets of ancient Rome to caves of Astypalaia where *'Nikasitimos mounted Timiona'*.

This is understandable, given power and position is predominately built on ancestry. Those with illustrious lines amassed fortunes while newcomers set about killing ruling families to take their stuff. A man's two most valuable possessions became his sword and his *other sword*.

Children meant everything, and anything with something dangling between their legs posed a threat.

The solution was simple. Sensible rulers took pet bureaucrats to the vet and had them fixed.

Once castrated, there was only so much damage a man could do. Removed from the temptation of starting their own prestigious bloodlines, eunuchs were allowed to climb the rungs of power – greased by size-challenged men – and hold positions of immense responsibility. These *guardians of the bed* served as a bridge between rulers and kept watch over the

treasure be it women, gold or secrets. Their incomplete condition left them permanent social outcasts of both genders.

Often incontinent and with effeminate features of soft bodies and shrill voices, eunuchs traded in a life of poverty for one of financial security and torment. It's not a pleasant career path, which is why it also doubled as one of the most barbaric punishments dished out to rapists, money fiddlers and traitors.

Islam's slave trade in Africa lasted 13 centuries, taking upwards of 17 million slaves after African kings were forced to sell their own people into slavery.

Nuts remain on the menu in courts of Indonesia, the Czech Republic, Alabama, Ukraine, Nigeria and wherever ISIS is hiding out.

Generally, the liberation of women effectively pushed eunuchs out of a job causing most civilisations to put the practice to bed. Well, not *quite*. Every era of human history has its eunuchs. We appear to be no different.

Aside from unwilling victims of cancer, accidental over-zealous injuries and a few fetishists – there's a new legion of cockless men aspiring to positions of influence. These eunuchs capitalise on prominent activist movements to gain social standing. By filming their self-mutilation journey, thousands of 'progressive' citizens in the West have turned genetic



“ Every era of human history has its eunuchs and we appear to be no different ”

sacrifice into a career.

Influencers have taken to social media platforms to make money from their 'transition journey' – using it as a message of empowerment. Those who repeat the LGBT+ talking points find themselves showered with attention, prestige, and the illusion of power within a saturated political landscape.

Many Youtubers, Tweeters and Instagrammers are confused kids looking for answers to their personal sexual identity struggle, finding them in the mouths of those who will profit from bloody sacrifice.

Gender reassignment surgery used to be reserved for a tiny percentage of genuine gender dysphoria sufferers, willing to go to extreme lengths to resolve the discord between their mental gender and physical presentation. This life-changing surgery is

up more than 1,500 per cent in European nations, creating serious concern predatory activist movements have brainwashed a generation into becoming the next castrati.

Kids are now money fountains; in the US in 2019 11,000 people underwent surgery worth \$304 million. It's obvious why medical practitioners, activists and social media companies encourage destructive behaviour, but are people *really* prepared to snip themselves for a bit of social street cred?

Yes. Social acceptance and 'identity' has become the most important commodity of our digitised world. Learning where and how you fit into the social order of life used to be a part of growing up. Offering a quick fix under the scalpel has accidentally resurrected butchery, giving rise to the next 'Age of the Eunuchs'. ●



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Beware The 'Karen' Bill

ARE WE LIVING A NIGHTMARE, OR DID THE AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENT JUST GIVE CANCEL CULTURE A GOVERNMENT BUREAUCRACY?
ASKS **DARA MACDONALD**

THE new censor-in-chief should be a concern for all Australians. The Online Safety Bill, which recently passed parliament, is a piece of legislation granting a huge new array of powers to the eSafety Commissioner, including the ability to order content be removed from the internet.

The controversial (though not widely reported) Online Safety Bill passed both Houses of Parliament on the 23rd June 2021. Amazingly, we have the Greens to thank for not passing this bill in its original form but proposing changes to moderate this draconian piece of legislation – albeit minor ones.

The main aim of the Online Safety Bill is to create the ability for Australian's to report objectionable internet content to the eSafety Commissioner. The bill's intended to capture bullying, abusive, and violent material, as well as intimate images that have been shared without user consent. But in order to carry out these objectives, the bill gives vast centralised powers to the censor-in-chief or 'eSafety Commissioner'.

No matter whether you're a wokeling or a culture warrior, a fetish enthusiast or a social conservative, you should be concerned about this commissioner's new powers.

The coalition government, which introduced this bill, seems oblivious to the fact that it has just given cancel culture a government bureaucracy, or as comedian Neel Kolhatkar put it, the government just passed the 'Karen' Bill.

This bill will Twitterfy the entire internet by allowing everyone to report content and gives a central authority power to order its take down.

The test for whether content can be considered "cyber-abuse material targeted at an Australian adult," and therefore vulnerable to a take-down order, is if "ordinary reasonable... Australian adults would regard the material as being... offensive."

Who's considered the 'reasonable' Australian in such polarised times is anyone's guess. What's considered offensive differs dramatically depending on if you ask the nearest tradie or the nearest blue-haired university student.

Even before this law was passed, the video game *Disco Elysium* was refused classification in Australia because it contains themes that "offend against the standards of morality, decency and propriety generally accepted by reasonable adults" and therefore, according to the legislation, could be reported to the eSafety Commissioner. This ban has since been overturned,



“Whether you're a wokeling or a culture warrior, a fetish enthusiast or a social conservative, you should be concerned”

but it goes to show how such a law can create a chilling effect where content isn't even created or released in the first place for fear it will be reported.

Many on the left may like this bill because it cracks down on bullying but, in doing so, it enables the moral panic of social conservatives.

A clear example of where leftwing groups may find themselves in hot water for the content they put out there is the controversial education program from the Safe Schools Coalition. The merits of the teaching materials aside, their explicit nature could make it subject to reporting under this legislation.

In fact, any kind of sexual content – from sex work to sex education – could be a target. As such, websites and apps that currently take a liberal attitude to sexual imagery, for instance

dating apps like Tinder and Grinder, might update their terms of use to prohibit it.

Ultimately, government censorship is a very bad idea. Censorship is never a power that can be safely wielded without empowering the preferences of some (usually those doing the censoring) and disempowering those whose views or preferences are to the contrary.

Australians need to look past the innocent-sounding title and objectives of the Online Safety Bill and see it for what it is: a weapon to be used against every single Australian for putting out content on the internet that others don't like. **1**

Dara Macdonald is a contributor for Young Voices, an admitted Australian lawyer, and founder of a new organisation that aims to create a culture of freedom, All Minus One.

Shove Your Social Credit System

FROM DOXXING TO CANCEL CULTURE, AND NOW A RAGING SOCIAL CREDIT SYSTEM, WHAT HAPPENED TO PERSONAL PRIDE AND ACCOUNTABILITY? ASKS **CORRINE BARRACLOUGH**

MY MORAL compass is pretty strong. I pride myself on my sound ethics, and I have absolutely no issue with doing my bit for the collective good.

But I'll be the judge of my behaviour, not Mr DoGooder next door, thanks.

I am answerable to my own conscience, the law and a higher power, man upstairs, whatever you wish to call him.

I do not want to be answerable to big government, or the nosey man next door.

We're in trouble, real trouble, if we just roll over and accept this social credit system, which is creeping ever so quietly into our society.

It started with cancelling people who hold views the radical left found unpalatable, which became such an issue, it became a prominent culture all of its own.

The leftist takeover of mainstream media is now painfully clear to see; any centre right views have been successfully silenced and the war on truth prevails.

Now, as we still grapple to live with the coronavirus over 18 months after it arrived on our shores, the dobbing culture of virtuous vultures is in full flight.

Without sounding alarmist, can we take a few moments to

note how a scarily similar social credit system works in China?

It's essentially a blacklist for people who are docked for various anti-social offences.

It's a massive set of databases and initiatives that monitor and assess the trustworthiness of individuals and companies.

Imagine having a Google review, constantly, on you.

If you're good, you'll get rewards.

If you're bad, you'll get punished.

If you're a good girl or boy,

you no longer have to wait for

Santa, or quietly delight in

scoring rewards at Woolies,

because this social credit system will bag you things like priority health care or deposit-free renting of public housing.

Meanwhile, a negative rating could see you banned from flights or trains.

The Chinese government is now experimenting with collecting data via video surveillance and real-time data transfers, like monitoring emission data from factories.

Those who lose credibility are, in short, screwed.

Those deemed untrustworthy could struggle to get loans, or be punished by being denied education.

Essentially, it's a reward mechanism for compliance.

Individuals who have been blacklisted over minor offences can apply to have their status



“If you're a good girl or boy, you no longer have to wait for Santa, or quietly delight in scoring rewards at Woolies”

restored. For instance, when they've repaid a debt, or maintained a good credit record for a specific period of time, they can wave a white flag, cross their fingers and hope for forgiveness.

But there's no guarantee, and those who have committed serious offences will not be taken off the blacklist; they'll be left to sit in the naughty corner, denied all sorts of joys for a very long time.

It's claimed the system is meant to improve transparency for the public.

Actually, it's a tool for the government to impose control on almost all aspects of people's lives.

To say this is Orwellian in nature, is an understatement.

Big government attempts to control every part of people's lives. It's all very 1984, isn't it?

What about data protection?

How about invasion of privacy? Where will this all of this end?

If there's one thing that makes me not want to do the right thing by my fellow citizens, it's this rise in naming and shaming which is no more than wide-scale doxxing.

I loathe this dobbing mentality, rather than focusing on self-improvement.

And before you roll your eyes and say something like this will never happen here, in proudly democratic Australia, remember it's been announced that the government intends to introduce a health app next year. This will monitor our shopping, exercise levels, even our intake of fruit and veg.

So, very soon, we're going to be rewarded with points, which we can exchange for social credits such as discounts or free tickets. Concerned now? You should be. **1**



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UNCOVERED

JUST CLIMBING THE WALLS



PHOTOGRAPHER
SACHA LEVENDECKER

MODEL
MARGOT GAJEWSKA







THE 2021 lockdowns had us climbing the walls, yet these images of Margot Gajewska shot by Sacha Leyendecker in Cologne give us a new appreciation for the great indoors. Based in Warsaw, Poland, Margot started her career in nude modelling six years ago and says she loves it so much that she's shot every day since. Lucky us.

How was your with Sacha Leyendecker for *Penthouse*?

It has been a pleasure to work with Sacha Leyendecker. Moreover, he is a professional photographer. Sometimes it is obvious that there is no creativity in the work of a photographers. Their work is hard, but lacks a creative element. This shoot took place in Cologne and my experience with Sacha was different. He is an artist. Not every photographer is a photo artist.

What drew you to nude modelling?

I love my job and I do it with a passion. I can express all my feelings

when I'm doing photoshoots. We are wired to have feelings. If we express these feelings in off-putting ways, this wiring can invite a disconnect in our relationships. By contrast, expressing feelings in a safe way can lead to our feeling more connected, especially to loved ones. Knowing how to express feelings tactfully is therefore vital if you want to feel close to people and to sustain your relationships.

When do you feel your sexiest?

When a man behaves like a real gentleman, makes compliments and treats me well – that makes me feel sexy.

What has been your most memorable photoshoot?

I have done a lot of cool shoots. The last memorable photoshoot I had was during a workshop in a mediaeval castle in Tuluza, France. The atmosphere in that place inspired a lot of creativity in me.

What type of person are you attracted to?

I prefer educated, smart, calm and careful

people. I'm a very open-minded, social, friendly person with a charming smile.

If we lucky enough to take you on a date, where would we take you?

To an art gallery or the theatre.

What do you like to do for fun?

I like travelling very much. It's like a hobby for me. I am always planning my next trip to go see the places I wish to know. It's a wonderfully unique experience every time. Knowing different people and different cultures is something that teaches you so much about the world and it's wonderful.

Where would you like to go next?

I am dreaming about a long trip to Norway.

What's a motto you live by?

Everything is possible. You just need to find the right approach. 📌

INSTAGRAM: @Margot.Haievska















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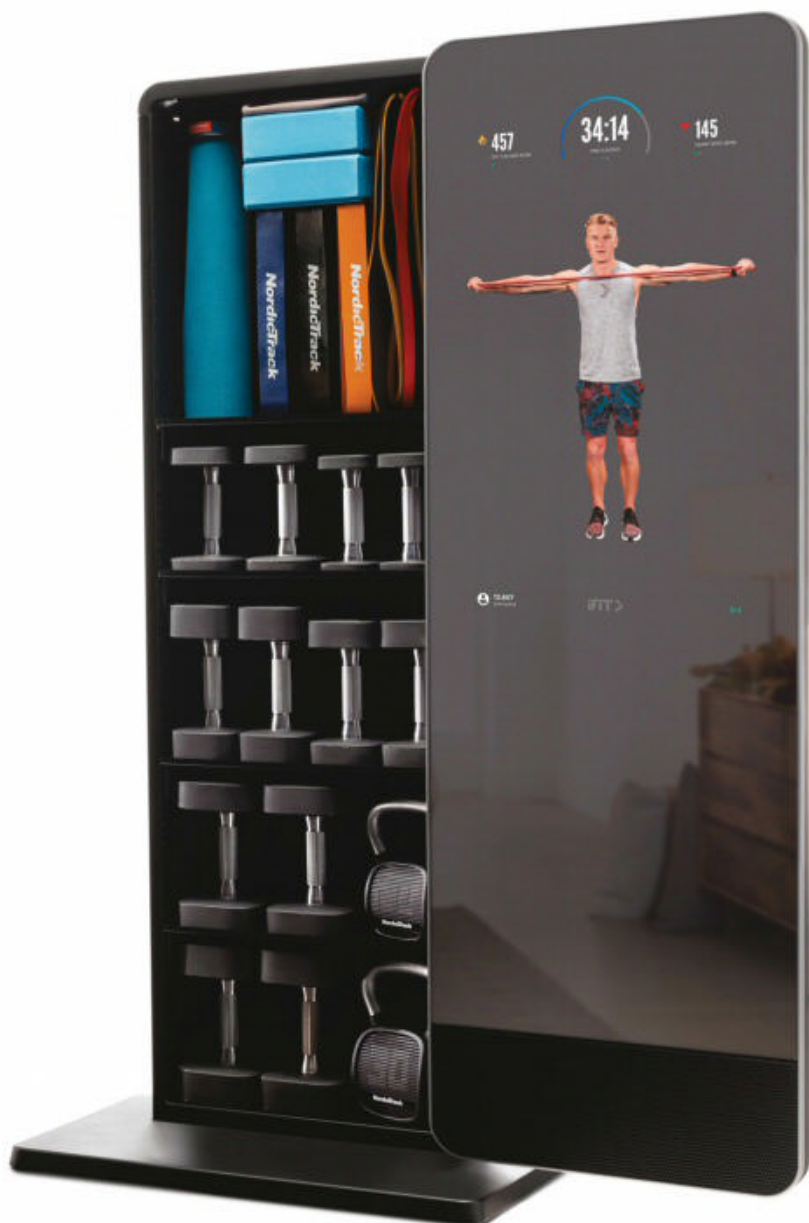
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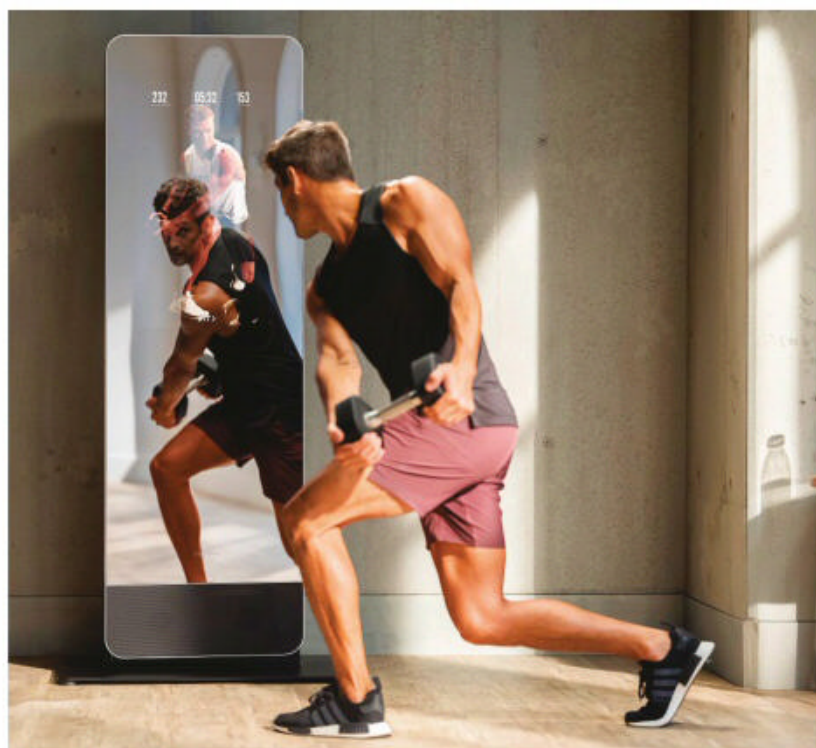
THE PENTHOUSE GUIDE TO ALL MUST-HAVE PRODUCTS





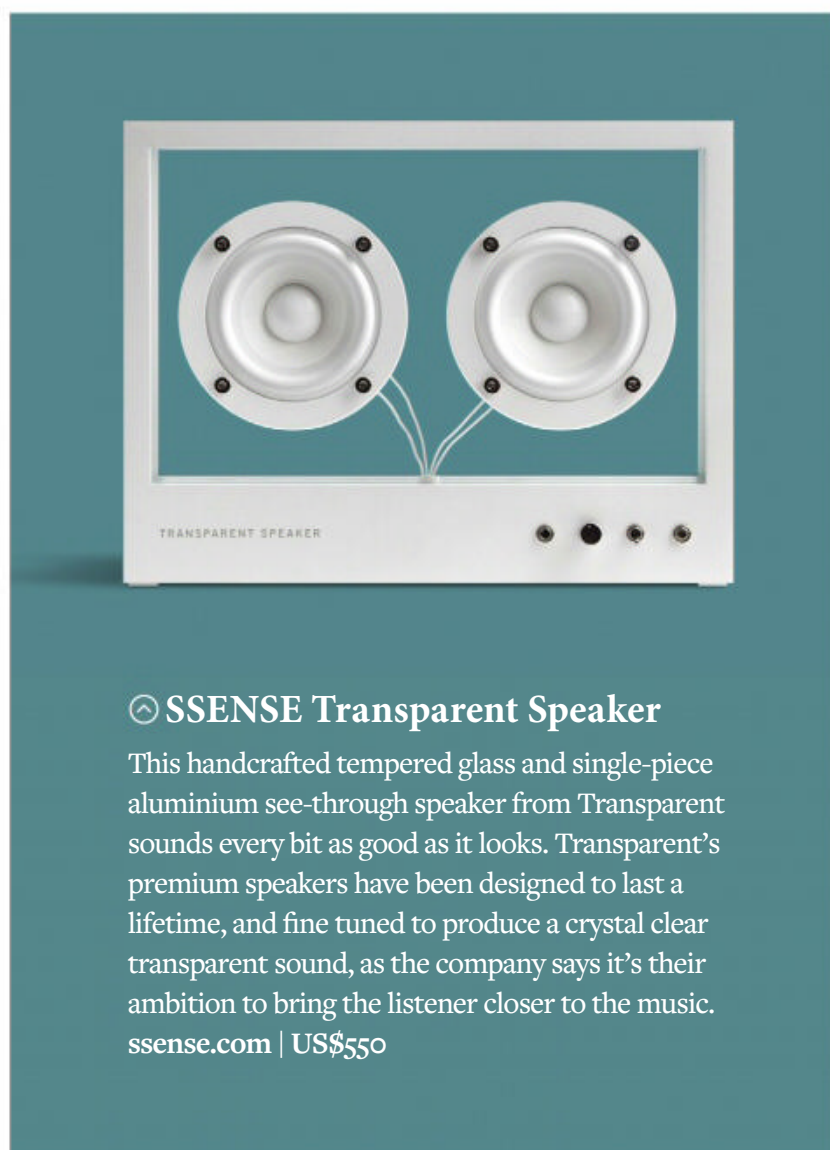
⌚ NordicTrack VAULT

The VAULT is a premium personal home gym – an all-in-one unit with full-length mirror, immersive HD touchscreen, and storage for a suite of dumbbells, kettlebells and other fitness accessories. Featuring a full-length, 60 x 24-inch mirror and 32-inch HD touchscreen display for immediate visual feedback, allowing you to match the form of the iFit trainer for a better workout. nordictrackfitness.com.au | \$4,499



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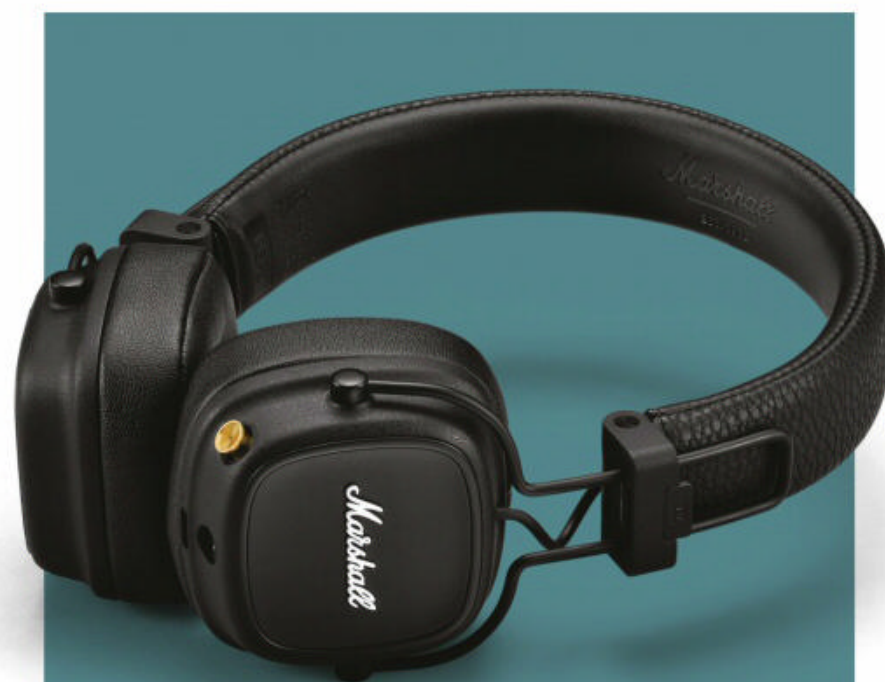


⌚ SSENSE Transparent Speaker

This handcrafted tempered glass and single-piece aluminium see-through speaker from Transparent sounds every bit as good as it looks. Transparent's premium speakers have been designed to last a lifetime, and fine tuned to produce a crystal clear transparent sound, as the company says it's their ambition to bring the listener closer to the music. ssense.com | US\$550

☑ **Gozney Roccbox**

Light up your pizza game with Roccbox. This restaurant-grade portable pizza oven has been designed for easy use and unrivalled performance, and has been engineered to replicate the performance of professional ovens. Roccbox's gas burner replicates a true wood flame, reaching incredible temperatures at the turn of a dial. More importantly, it can cook a pizza in under 60 seconds. au.gozney.com | \$799



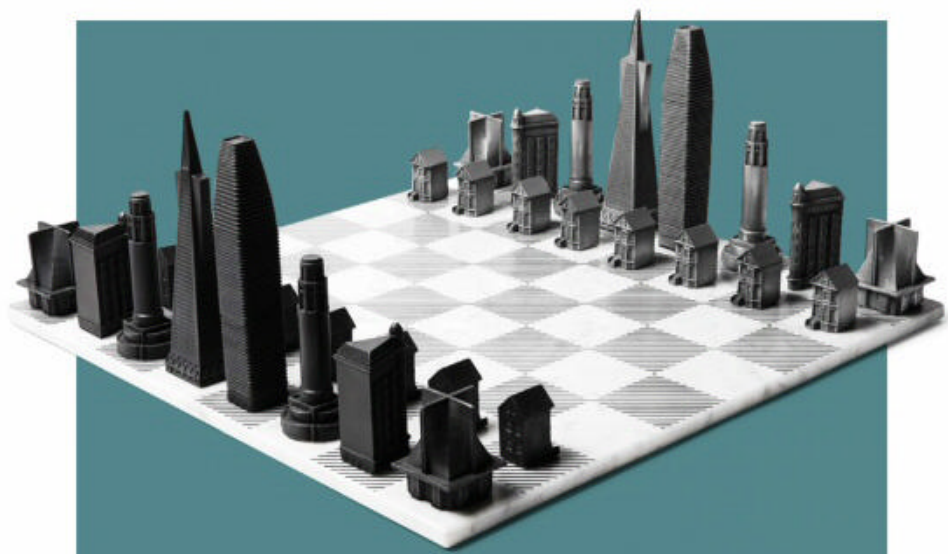
☑ **Marshall Major IV Headphones**

Sick of your noise-cancelling headphones running out of juice? Meet Major IV. These iconic headphones from Marshall can go for over 80 hours before they need a charge. In addition to wireless charging, improved ergonomic fit and custom-tuned dynamic drivers, the Major IV delivers an unrivalled aural adventure that you'll never want to turn off. marshallheadphones.com/au | \$249



☑ **UNDONE Nippon Erotica: Shunga Collection**

Life imitates erotic art in this cheeky collection by UNDONE watches. The UNDONE Nippon Erotica: Shunga Collection celebrates the art of Shunga: a type of Japanese erotic art, and includes two watches for purchase; the Shunga: Edo and the Shunga: Meiji. Get in quick though, as each design is limited to 300 pieces worldwide with each uniquely serialised. undone.com | US\$339



☺ Skyline Chess: San Francisco Edition

The perfect addition to your man den, this premium metal chess set features a hand-printed Carrara marble board and gunmetal-toned double weighted pieces that each represent landmarks of San Francisco, including: Painted Ladies, Coit Tower, St Mary's Cathedral and more. Checkmate. skylinechess.com | US\$899



☺ NURVV Run Smart Insoles

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☺ Angell Electric Bike

It's as light as a feather but the Angell Electric Bike rides circles around all the other e-bikes on the market at the moment. While a lot of e-bikes are clunky eyesores, the Angell is eye-catching in all the right ways. Featuring a super slimline and lightweight frame, an integrated display and loads of cool features, this e-bike is the coolest way to commute. angell.bike | from \$387

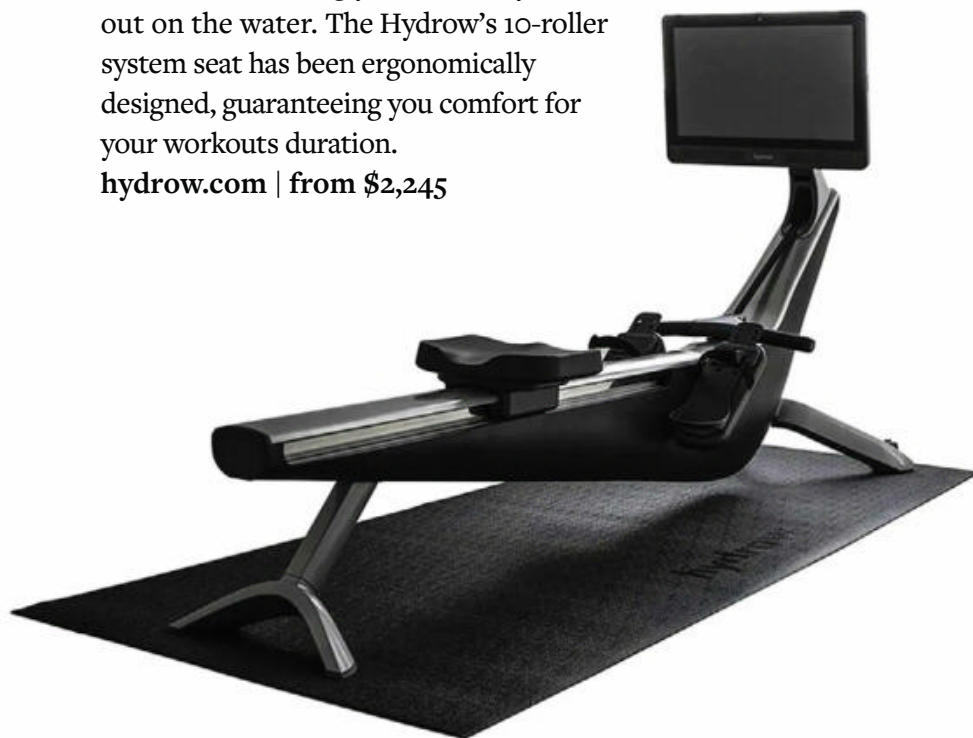


☺ **Purdey 18L Backpack With Blanket Carrier**

This limited edition backpack from Purdey is perfect for any weekend adventure. Made from English oak bark tanned leather and nettle cotton canvas, this luxurious bag features a leather carry handle, adjustable sliding straps, bespoke hardware and attachments for your keys. purdy.com | \$3,397

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☺ **Macallan Peter Blake 1967**

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☺ A Tender Dissolution 30

A Tender Dissolution explores the BDSM practice of 'shibari', the art of rope binding, in this book by fine art photographer Aaron Polin. A combination of flowers, fine art nudes and rope, this book is the perfect addition to your coffee table. aaronmcpolin.com



☺ Leather & Oudh

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OPEN LETTER

Dear Health Bureaucrats,

We are sick and tired of your flip-flopping advice.

One day we are told that lockdowns are crucial to get us out of this crisis, the next we're advised they are to be a last resort.

On Monday, we are told that the Astra Zeneca vaccine is safe and should be accepted by anyone in an outbreak area. Hours later, a different medical talking head tells us she does not want certain ages to get this vaccine.

On Tuesday, we are told to "trust the science".

On Wednesday, we are re-advised to "trust the data"... which contradicts the science.

By Thursday, we're almost relieved to be in lockdown so we can have a lie down.

You see, if you want people to listen to you, and take your advice, it would be marvellously helpful if you could put your heads together and decide what your official advice will be.

We cannot keep up.

We are exhausted.

We are trying to feel that we still have a life, while not actually having a life.

And we are all sick and tired of this lingering cloud of doom, too.

We are told that coronavirus is a pandemic and we should all stay home to avoid certain death.

Meanwhile, we see other countries opening up, throwing giddy parties, getting their lives back while we're looking at the actual statistics in front of us and scratching our heads.

Recently released ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) figures do not actually indicate a huge increase in deaths.

We have had a total of under 1000 COVID deaths across all of Australia so far in 2021; do you advice givers think we are not keeping up with the news?

ABS figures show one in five Australians are experiencing high or very high levels of psychological distress. That's not from COVID, is it? That's actually from lockdowns, being separated from loved ones, and having to close the doors on small businesses (again).

People are feeling exhausted for no reason, nervous, hopeless, depressed, worthless. That's not from COVID, either, is it? That's from leaders who are pressing the panic button and jolting an entire country from pause to play depending on their mood.

A cluster of irritating bureaucrats turned pundits are scrapping it out for daily airtime across the embarrassing fearmongering platforms we are unfortunate enough to call mainstream media.

Who decided that COVID politics was the way forward?

Is this about science or is it all about politics, control and propaganda?

Are we talking science or subjectivity?

In launching Norman Swan as the unofficial health spokesman on the(ir) ABC, our own national broadcaster has been running parallel commentary since day one of this nightmare.

Remember when he predicted last year that we would soon be seeing 70,000-80,000 cases every day? Cast your mind back to when he said we were 14-20 days behind Italy (which has now had over 128,000 deaths)?

While South Australia's Nicola Spurrier warned footy fans against catching an imaginary infectious football, some insisted on wearing masks to 'send a message' rather than clearly stating realistic health benefits.

State Premiers and eager sidekicks have relentlessly put politics before the national interest.

In short, it's a shambles.

Even if you muster the energy to change channel, all you get is different talking head giving a different version of the same nightmare.

Is it any wonder people are confused?

They don't know who to trust anymore.

This pandemic may well be a once in a hundred year's event, and it may well not be of your making, but if you want anyone to continue to listen to your advice from this point, you would be wise to get your story straight.

Yours truly,

Penthouse Magazine

WHY SPEAK EASY WHEN YOU CAN ROAR.



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